YET NOT I”

BY REV. W. HASLAM, M.A.

AUTHOR OF

“FROM DEATH INTO LIFE.”

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THE WHIT-MONDAY GATHERING. *See page 237.*

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OR,

More Years of My Ministry.

BY

REV. W. HASLAM, M.A.
(Late Incumbent of Curzon Chapel, Mayfair,)
AUTHOR OF
"FROM DEATH INTO LIFE,"
"THE THREEFOLD GIFT OF GOD," ETC., ETC.

"Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 COR. xv. 10.)

Sixteenth Thousand.

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TO

MY BELOVED WIFE AND HELP-MEET,

THIS VOLUME

Is affectionately Inscribed:

IN REMEMBRANCE OF

HER UNWEARIED AND MOST EFFICIENT ASSISTANCE

IN ITS PREPARATION.

PREFACE.

ENCOURAGED and cheered by the success and blessing which have been vouchsafed to my autobiography, "FROM DEATH INTO LIFE," I have ventured to continue the narrative of the Lord's dealings with me; and tell of more years of my ministry. I call this volume "YET NOT I," for obvious reasons. It will be seen, as the reader proceeds with these chapters, that I have been led to places I did not intend, and to do works I had not thought of. The scenes and blessings here recorded were as surprising to myself as to others, if not more so.

I believe that our experiences are given us not for ourselves, but for others. Therefore I have endeavoured, as simply as I can, to set forth some of the wonderful things it has pleased God to show me. May He, who enabled me in them, and by them, to trust Him more fully, enable others to derive similar profit and blessing from the perusal of this narrative.

Some people have considered the statements in my former volume as exaggerated, not to say "untrue!" I will only say that persons who have been in such scenes, and have witnessed the mighty power of God, will think that they are somewhat guardedly and tamely put forth. Indeed, for fear of taxing the credulity of some of my readers too much, I have understated some things, and left many others unsaid.

Exception has been taken, especially in reference to the dreams, visions, and revelations recorded, which were given to people among whom I was working. I do not profess to account for these things, or even to explain them. I merely relate the facts as they came under my notice; and that not altogether so fully as I might have done.

Again, the work of the Lord is attributed to "Cornish excitement." As to this, I cannot but think that it is not in Cornwall only that persons are excited, who have anything to be excited about. I am bound to say that people in other parts of England, under similar circumstances, demonstrate in the same way.

To God be the glory and praise for all the good that is in the book, and to me the blame for all that is wrong.

W. HASLAM.

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"YET NOT I."

CHAPTER I.

The Call to Bath.

1860.

IN a previous volume I have told how the Lord in His mercy brought me "From Death into Life." I had been given over by three physicians to die; but it pleased God, who is also Jehovah Rophi,* to heal and restore me to health. My renewed life I gave fully and freely to Him and to His service. I laboured chiefly in ecclesiastical things; for as yet I knew nothing of spiritual truth. Nevertheless I verily thought I was doing God service. I must say that He did not deny His blessing to my efforts, but rather encouraged me by many answers to prayer, though I was still unconverted. We are told that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. viii. 12).

At that time I had no suspicion of the absolute necessity of conversion, or that I must go to God for forgiveness and reconciliation before I could offer Him acceptable service. So far, mine was only a human religious devotion; but yet it was real and true as far as it went.

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* "The Lord that healeth thee" (Exod. xv. 26).

Thus I continued till it pleased God to open my eyes to see myself dead in trespasses and sins. Then, truly "the sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul." "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful." He "delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling" (see Ps. cxvi.)

It was a terrible awakening. But I thank God that it took place while there was room and time for repentance. How awful if I had died in that delusion of self-righteousness! And if I had only discovered my great mistake when I was beyond the reach of hope and mercy! I do most heartily thank God, and record this experience again here, in a general way, that it may be a warning to others who are going on as unconsciously as I was in a religious — yet unconverted—life.

I quite believe that it is possible to rise to much excellence and sweetness of character, and all the time to be dead in sins and separated from God. I have shown in my former volume ("From Death into Life") the difference between human religiousness and divine spirituality—the barrenness of the one, and the fruitfulness of the other. In the former I laboured with all zeal and earnestness, but failed to produce any spiritual results: in the latter the power of God was present to awaken and save souls. I, who before used to work at teaching and building-up people because they had been made members of Christ in baptism, was now led to direct them to *repentance* and *faith*, the fundamental and most essential conditions on which the promises of God were made to them in that sacrament.

It is easy to see throughout that earlier Narrative that the Power in which I worked was not my own, but was rather a Power which used or exercised me; so that, by the mercy of God, wherever I went to declare the glad tidings of salvation, souls were converted to God.

In recording more years of my ministry I feel I can give no better title to this book than

"YET NOT I!"

If I had been asked to choose my places of labour, I do not think I should have selected those which are mentioned in this book. If I had sat down to plan and arrange my work, I should not have dared to design what I was led to do. Or, if I had been required to consider the best and most judicious mode of accomplishing the work, I should not have adopted that which was followed. To speak honestly, the work has not been mine; and if the result of my labours has been more abundant, I can say with the Apostle that it is "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. xv. 10).

In the closing chapter of "From Death into Life," I stated that the day after receiving my dismissal from Hayle, in Cornwall, there came to me, altogether unsought, an invitation to go to Bath and take charge of a mission district in that city. I could not but regard this as an unmistakable call from God. One door had shut behind; another had opened in front.

I felt very sad to leave my Cornish congregation—all the more because I knew that they would mourn for me. I feared, moreover, that anger might get the better of their sorrow, and urge them on either to secede from the Church of England, or to do and say irritating things. Even before I had any idea of leaving, some of my people had expressed misgivings, and said: "What will become of us when you go away?" Now the dreaded event had really come, and that under very trying circumstances. I was dismissed for my work's sake—the very reason, they would naturally think, why I ought to have been retained.

Notwithstanding this, the call was so clear that I determined, in simple dependence upon God, to step into the unknown future. Satan, I think, sometimes comes appearing to sympathize with us in times of sorrow or disappointment, and suggesting that there might have been some other plan or better dispensation than that under which we are lying. He injects into the mind such thoughts as these:—"God is hard—mysterious—inscrutable." In the present case he reminded me of all the good I had done in Hayle. Surely it was not just that God should allow my dismissal, and so break up such an important work. He also insinuated after this fashion: "The Church of England does not treat you well. Few clergymen, if any, have done so much in the county during the last eighteen or nineteen years as you, yet no one acknowledges you or your merit. After building church, house, and school at Baldhu; after designing and building schools and parsonage-houses, and restoring churches—you are dismissed; and no one objects to the act. Some even rejoice at the prospect of your going, and will rejoice still more when they hear you are gone! God allows all this. Then, you have nothing to go to but a curacy in Bath—call it an incumbency, if you will!"

Sorrow often makes us selfish, and opens the ear to such evil suggestions. If we are disposed to listen, we shall most likely have little else to do, and thus be made thoroughly wretched and discontented. However, I did not give way to Satan's temptation. My expectation, even in my unconverted High Church days, was from God. I used then to glory in being slighted and passed over as an extreme man. And now that I was really, and not nominally, on the Lord's side, I was the better able to bear such rejection, and was content to be superseded, not expecting in those days anything else. From one point of view, this dismissal was a brand; from another, it was a badge of honour.

If I had known nothing of Bath, I might have rejoiced in the prospect of labouring in such a great and influential city; but this was not the case. I had on two former occasions visited that place. Each time I had left it discomfited and glad to get away, saying, "I will never settle in Bath."

The first of these visits was in my unconverted days. On that occasion I found that the pain in my side returned, together with all the bad symptoms that had shown themselves before I first went to Cornwall, where I was so wonderfully restored to health. I was obliged to shorten my stay in Bath, and beat a precipitate retreat to the air which had previously been so beneficial; I found it to be so again. From this circumstance I supposed that Cornwall must be my place of work, and my abode for life.

Besides this physical discouragement, I had another of a spiritual kind. Only three months before I received the call I had been summoned to Bath to visit a dying relative. While there I fell in with the vicar of the parish in which I was staying. He was very friendly, and asked me to preach in his church on the following Sunday. I agreed to his request, and knowing from the little conversation we had that he was not what I should call a "revival man" (that is, one who expected results, and laid himself out for conversions), I determined to be very proper and preach like a quiet Evangelical.

I took my subject from the Gospel of the day, in order to show that I had no intention of alarming or disturbing the people; proposing to give a simple exposition of the passage with the application. My text was, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" (Matt. xxii. 12). I commenced by saying that the Gospel hardened and bound up souls, if it did not melt them. The Word of the Lord was the savour of death unto death, if it was not the savour of life unto life. There is nothing so hardening as the Gospel continually heard and rejected: no sinner is so hard as a Gospel-hardened sinner.

I went on to say that Gospel privileges are here likened not to bread and water—prison fare, enough to keep body and soul together,—but to the banquet that a king makes on a great occasion, such as the marriage of his son. Moreover, it is a feast worthy of the Royal Giver, whom we should expect to provide everything that can gratify the mind, the eye, and the taste. Such is the Gospel! What a blessed thing it is to be an accepted guest! Better still, to have sympathy and communion with others at the feast! Best of all is the presence of the King, when He comes in to see the guests! In order to be welcome, we must have on the wedding-garment, which signifies, spiritually, our justification. Too many, I continued, are satisfied without this garment, thinking they are as safe as others, until the King comes in. Then, while there is rejoicing among those who have the garment, there is evident dismay and confusion among those who have it not.

At this point in my sermon, a poor man sitting in the free seats shouted, out of the fulness of his heart, "Glory be to God! Hallelujah!" This caused a consternation amongst some members of the congregation, and a lady fainted. Thinking that if I stopped it would only add to the confusion, I proceeded, remarking that when the Spirit of the Lord detected an unconverted man or woman in a Christian congregation, it was as if the Lord said, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?" My advice to such convicted persons was: Do not be speechless, lest the command be given, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness" (Matt. xxii. 13).

People imagine this "outer darkness" is in the next world; but it is in this world also, for surely the application of the parable is for the present time. The binding of hand and foot is that judicial hardness which follows when people refuse spiritual teaching and prefer their self-righteousness, —when in the midst of offers of salvation they remain unsaved, and persist in their own doings. This is, spiritually, the binding of hands and feet, in which condition it is impossible to do anything acceptable to God, or to walk with Him. This parable, I said in closing, was an awful warning against formality and a Christless religion.

"You are right!" shouted the poor man on the free benches. "Glory be to God! I'm not afraid. My soul is saved!"

At the conclusion of the sermon I announced that I would preach again in the evening, and then dismissed the congregation, many of whom were evidently perturbed. On going into the vestry I observed that the vicar's countenance was quite changed; the clerk looked aghast; and the churchwardens appeared as if they *could* say something, but did not. A relative who was waiting for me at the door said, "God bless you for speaking so plainly! Come out here: there are a number of happy people waiting to shake hands with you." When the vicar came out, he saw me surrounded by them. "Ah," he said, "you do not know these people as well as I do." To this I made no reply.

As we walked homewards, he told me that he did not know what sort of man I was, or he would certainly never have asked me to occupy his pulpit: he did not like that fire-eating kind of preaching. After our midday dinner, the vicar again alluded to my sermon, and said that my preaching would "never do for Bath, however well it might suit Cornwall." In the evening the church was somewhat empty, excepting the free seats. Whether I was discouraged by this, or whether the Spirit of God was grieved, I know not; but I was very unhappy all the time I was preaching—so much so, that I retained a prejudice against Bath.

These two hindrances, physical and spiritual, created in me forebodings that pressed heavily on me after I had received the call. Nevertheless, I did not linger at Hayle longer than was necessary: taking leave of the people, I set out for Bath, intending to send for my family as soon as I found a suitable house.

On my journey I felt oppressed, though my heart still said, "Yes, Lord;" and I went forward willingly. Instead of regretting and bewailing the past I began to think of the future, and call to mind the encouragements I had received from the Lord, as a basis upon which to rest my expectations. I remembered the right hand of the Lord, and His wonders in old time, being assured that the Most High changes not.

As at Hayle, I determined again to know nothing "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified" as the foundation of my work. As the brazen serpent was the only remedy for the dying Israelites, so now Christ crucified must be the only door of salvation for perishing sinners in Bath. I could see that I must hold up Christ, so that the Holy Ghost might take of the things of Christ, and show them to the people. I must begin with conversion—out-and-out salvation by God—and nothing else.

Church-going and Church services are right and good; so are family worship and private Bible-reading and prayer: but these cannot be the basis of spiritual religion. Reformations of this and other kinds often satisfy dead souls while they remain in their unsaved state, and so ultimately perish. Again, when a soul *is* saved, it must not be allowed to suppose that it is *being* saved, or that it is in a state of probation, as if its final condition depended on its *faithfulness to grace.* Either the soul is saved by the eternal and unchanging God, or it is not. Either the believer is safe in the arms of Jesus, or he is not there. If he is, he cannot add to that safety; let him then rest in the assurance, and apply his mind and thoughts to things which belong to the new and happy state into which he is called, with the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I saw clearly enough that this must be my line and course of conduct if I wished to have God's blessing and His support in my work.

On reaching Bath, I went to the place appointed for my temporary abode. I found that the lady of the house was a Christian person, and with her I was at home at once; I have ever since maintained an unbroken and friendly intercourse with her. I have said she was a Christian, but she was certainly not one after the Cornish type. She knew and believed many beautiful things about Christ and His Church; but the salvation of souls did not occupy the prominent place which I thought, and still think, it should do in the heart of a true lover of the Lord. She supposed that salvation would come, or follow in due time somehow, while people were learning about the doctrines of Christianity. She had great admiration for Bath and Bath people, and said: "You know it is stated that God made the country, and man made the town; but I cannot help thinking that God made Bath!" She certainly raised my idea of this influential place—this splendid city of palaces, and of wealthy people.

After a night's rest I set out to make the acquaintance of my rector, who was a hearty and generous man. "You are a strange being," he said; "why did you not come up and see the place you were coming to? Perhaps you will not like it. I offered to pay all expenses, you know."

"Well," I replied, "for two reasons: one, that I had not more than three weeks to remain with my dear people; another, that I felt sure the Lord had called me to this place, and therefore, whether I liked it or not, I must come."

"Now," he said, "let me tell you about your parish. It is very rough; but you shall preach in my church sometimes." This he said out of kindness, and I accepted it as such.

When he saw that I was willingly going to the work in that "rough place," he said in his candid way, "I could not go there myself for the world; but I tell you what, I will set you perfectly free to work as you will. Don't come to me for anything but money; you will want that, I think."

We had a little quiet talk about Cornwall and Bath, and then it was time to go to his daily parish meeting in the vestry. Punctually as the clock was striking twelve he appeared, and took his place, to listen to the various cases of distress or deception which were brought before him, the latter of which he was very quick to discover. The adroitness wherewith he discharged his work proved that sharp, short, and decisive, was his motto.

By one o'clock his business was done, and then he took me into the district of St. Paul's. He showed me Avon Street, with its many courts, and said the policemen always went down there in couples; it was not safe for them to go alone. "They need not be afraid," he added; "for they seldom see anything wrong. The moment they appear at the end of the street, a signal is given, and passed from one to another, so that the people are on their best and most demure behaviour. The officers of justice never see anything wrong, unless there happens to be a fight, or a cry of murder; or, it may be, some poor drunk and incapable man or woman who cannot get out of the way."

This Avon Street consisted of fine houses of three and four storeys; these had been inhabited by fashionable people in the days of Lady Huntingdon. In the middle of the street was a chapel built by the Wesleys. It had been deserted by their followers, who had gone into a more respectable part of the city, and built themselves another and finer edifice. They had let this one to an undertaker, to keep mourning-coaches and hearses in; but the rector having offered a higher price, obtained possession. Finding the veritable Wesley pulpit in a corner, he put it up, and otherwise furnished the place for divine service. This was to be my church. A public-house which had failed was secured for a penny bank, and as a residence for the Bible-woman and others. I was introduced to the Scripture-reader belonging to this part, and made an appointment with him to go round the district the next day.

We went back to luncheon, and spent the afternoon in driving about the city, park, and neighbourhood. In the evening I took a quiet peep at my district by myself, and fell in with the Scripture-reader. My talk with him was anything but encouraging. He had been many years in the place, and had settled down into a routine, delivering so many tracts, paying so many visits, in so many hours. Then his "report" was ready for the Saturday. As to seeking the salvation of souls, he never seemed to dream of such a thing. "I am convinced," he said, "you will never do anything of that kind in this street!"

"People are wicked enough?" I said inquiringly.

"Oh yes; plenty of that."

"Then it will not take much argument to convince them of sin."

"No; certainly not."

"What is the difficulty?"

"I don't know," he replied; "but it is difficult."

"God can convince of sin."

"Oh yes, God can; I do not doubt that for a moment: but I don't think He will."

He was evidently confirmed in the idea that God would not do anything; and that therefore *he* could not.

"What do you do," I inquired, "when you visit them?"

"Why, I read a chapter or tract, and sometimes have a little talk."

"Shall we go and see some one now?"

"No," he replied; "it is after five, and I must go home."

"Then tell me as we walk along what you say to them."

"Oh, I tell them that 'the way of transgressors is hard,' you know, and that they had better give up drinking, fighting, and sinning. Sometimes I persuade them to follow my advice, and they do it for a time; but it seldom lasts. The women are worse than the men, and the children more impudent than all."

"That is a pleasant prospect!" I replied.

"Oh, it is not pleasant at all," he said; "it is most discouraging: but some one must be at the post."

"The Scripture tells us," I rejoined, "that we should open their eyes, and show them that they are going to ruin and to hell, and that if they die as they are they will be lost for ever."

"Dear me, sir, they would never stay long enough to hear all that."

I left him to return home, feeling heavy-hearted and discouraged, but yet strong in the conviction that there is nothing too hard for the Lord. Surely, I thought, if there is one set of people more than another on whom the Lord has compassion, it must be these degraded people, steeped in sin and vice. Surely He cannot bear to see these immortal souls perishing—poor sheep without a shepherd!

I never could understand Christians who do not care about the salvation of souls. Teaching and building-up are very important; but what is the use of building up *dead* souls? And even the work of edifying believers is not *so urgent* as that of rescuing the perishing.

CHAPTER II.

The New Sphere.

1863.

THE next morning, having provided myself with some sandwiches for luncheon, I set out for a day's work with the Scripture-reader, according to appointment. In the course of conversation I found out that whatever he had known of conversion in his own experience had completely slipped out of its place; and that the even tenor of his daily routine consisted in relieving temporal distress, with very little, if any, spiritual teaching.

Under the guidance of this man, who was well known to all the people, I made successful progress in visiting. There were about one hundred houses in Avon Street alone, and more than eighteen hundred people. Whole families lived in one room; consequently the staircase was common to all. The front door was always open, but the landlord of the house, or some one belonging to him, kept his eye upon it to see who came in, and more especially who went out, lest they should take away more than belonged to them. The filth and bad atmosphere were beyond all description. How human beings can live in such places, or be content to have them so, I cannot imagine.

We visited one old man, who lived in a cellar that was cold and green with damp; yet he was cheerful, and content to call it his "home."

I asked him if the water ever came in.

"Oh yes; when the tide be high, it do come up here for a hour or two."

"What do you do then?"

"Why," he said, suiting his action to the words, "I puts my legs up on the stool, and goes on with my shoe-mending. I keeps my tools up there," he continued, placing his hand on a shelf, "where they be safe from the wet."

In his person he was a dirty and grimy man, who apparently never washed himself from one month's end to another. Yet he seemed happy in his dirt, and quite satisfied with his lodging.*

Bad and vile as these dwellings were, from attic to cellar, their occupants, with a few exceptions, were far worse; their depravity was equal to their ignorance. It was easy to see that drink had a great effect in stupefying and drowning their senses. Twenty, thirty, and sometimes forty people, might be found living in one house, and that without any adequate supply of water. The company turned the water on once or twice a day; but there were no cisterns in the houses to hold or keep it, and the little vessel each tenant brought out to be filled with this most useful commodity would not hold anything like sufficient for their need. Neither could they, in such a poisonous atmosphere, keep sweet and wholesome the small quantity they had. These poor creatures had no chance of making tea or coffee for themselves, and little or no opportunity to drink water; so there was nothing for them but the beer sold in the public-houses. These, I need scarcely add, abounded in this street and neighbourhood.

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* In a similar cellar I subsequently found a family consisting of five persons, all huddled together in a most miserable condition. Their story moved the compassion of a kind lady, who commissioned me to take better and more healthy lodgings for them at her expense, and remove them out of that wretched damp place. She said she could get no sleep for thinking of these poor creatures. I soon obtained a two-roomed lodging for them, with a good fire; but this failed to please them as well as their old abode. The following day, on calling, I saw that they had darkened the windows with paper; "the light," they said, "made them feel so cold." In a day or two after, I found to my surprise that they had gone back to their "own sweet cellar." "There's no place like home!"

What with the dwellings of the people, their manner of life, their low degraded state of morals, their ignorance, indifference, recklessness, and occasional impudence, the work was indeed a trial of faith. As the Scripture-reader pointed out these things to me one by one, he seemed to exult in my dismay, as much as to say—"There, now! do you think that even you could do better than I have done in this locality?" It was a bad "locality," and no mistake; but still I could not help thinking—"What is the use of the Gospel if it cannot touch such people? What place is there in all Bath that would excite the attention and sympathy of the Lord Himself more than this?"

As we went on in our round, passing from house to house and room to room, I took notice of the sick, making a list, and promising to visit them on the following days. Now and then we found some poor but comparatively respectable people. Two tidy-looking women, who lived in adjoining rooms, told me that they went out at five o'clock in the morning for three hours to sweep shops, from which they were allowed to bring away the sweepings. Every two or three days it took them several hours to assort the rags, pieces of paper, pins, needles, and a number of other articles. Sometimes they found coins. They sold the rags, paper, pins, and needles, and were paid so much a week for sweeping.

Truly, I found out that poverty sharpened the wits of those people in a most surprising manner. The majority of them, both men and women, lived from hand to mouth, I know not how. Sometimes the man brought home a shilling, sometimes more, which he had obtained by doing odd jobs. Others had nothing to do: they were "out of luck." One man told me he had eaten nothing for three days; yet he seemed lively enough. "Oh," he said, "I gets two penn'orth o' gin, yer see, and a little 'bacca, and that does for a day or two; and yer see," he continued, unbuttoning his ragged coat, "I braces up all tight here; that's a wonderful thing to go on. The stomach don't want nothin' when it's done up close."

On our rounds we fell in with many sweeps; they were looked upon as "the gentlemen" of the place, who professed to obtain their living "honest." There were also a number of gipsies, who kept much together; they occupied themselves with tin and wire work, making lanterns, toasting-forks, and such like. While some remained at home and worked, others went out and sold their wares. One happy and intelligent man among them pointed to his family of boys and girls who were all busy chipping and cutting wood. "There they are," he said, "working away. That there," pointing to a faggot of willow or ash, "is our meat, drink, fire, bed, covering, and all."

"Indeed," I answered inquiringly.

"Yes," he replied, "we work at that, yer see; we sells the skewers and things for our bread, and with some of the chips we makes a fire, and the smallest on it we puts down for a bed. Look here," he said, drawing on one side a ragged curtain. There I beheld a boy fast asleep, on and under some of these veritable shavings. "A capital bed and blanket they makes, I can tell yer; and when it's werry cold we puts on our coats and things on the top, yer know, and there we sleeps as snug as can be, and the fire goes on burning all the night."

He and his family seemed perfectly content and happy with their lot. I told them that I had come to be their minister, and that I should like to see them at church; also at the meetings which I intended to hold for them from time to time. This I notified in every place we called at; but I cannot say that I everywhere met with so encouraging a response as I did here.

These gipsy people gave me to understand that they only wintered in Bath; in the spring they went travelling about the country. Towards the end of the summer, with many others of the Avon Street people, they worked at hop-picking in Kent and Sussex.

"How do they get there?" I inquired.

"Oh, bless yer, they walks. How do yer think we gets all over the country? We walks, to be sure, and in all weathers; and they does the same, there and back again."

We next came to a Roman Catholic part of the street. Here we passed along more rapidly, as the people in many instances would not receive us. In their eyes we were nothing but "heretics," and themselves "the true church." By and by we shall have occasion to speak of these, as well as of the gipsies.

Up to this point we had spent five hours, from nine to two o'clock, incessantly walking, climbing up dark and dirty stairs, and then feeling our way down again. It was now time for luncheon, so we retired to the missionary's room for that purpose: there I reviewed some of the notes I had made.

At three o'clock we turned into a court close by, which we found to be infested, so far as we could ascertain, with a set of most impudent young women. When we knocked at their doors, they bid us "Come in," though some were in bed and others but half-dressed. They made great fun of our modesty, and laughed aloud when we beat a speedy retreat. We visited four different houses in this part, and found them all more or less of the same kind. Besides this, there were numbers of low public-houses, which were much frequented. The publicans did not care to look at or notice us, for they were too busy and too sure of their customers.

Then we went over the Penny Bank, as it was called, to consider its capabilities. This, as we have already said, had once been a public-house, but was now rescued for better purposes. Here we found a room that had been the dancing-saloon. I at once made up my mind to utilise it, and also a small square room next to the chapel, for Bible-classes and meetings.

From this we went on to the lodging-houses for beggars and such like; my guide remarking that he had "kept the best till last."

On entering I was surprised to see the cleanliness and order. I was told, however, that these places were open to the inspection of the police, and were only licensed on such conditions. The "gentlemen" and "ladies" who frequented these "hotels" had not yet come in; so we went out to get some rest and refreshment.

After six o'clock I returned and visited four of these houses, just to see and take note of the people who inhabited them. They were for the most part, if not altogether, the ordinary whining, miserable-looking beggars who are seen in the streets; but they were neither miserable nor whining now. Some who had been "blind" had recovered eyesight; others who had been cripples were now quite well; and "soldiers" and "sailors" had arms and legs restored to them. There were also a number of women among them. A group were sitting round the fire as merry as crickets, telling of the day's exploits and gains with great glee. I only looked at them from the distance, intending some other day to come into closer contact and intercourse.

In other parts of this spacious room some were playing with cards or at draughts, and others were industriously employed in making various little articles for sale. It was a busy as well as a merry scene, and these miserable beings showed no signs of trouble or distress in their "beggars' hotel." It appeared to me, and further observation confirmed the impression, that these men and women were far too clever and impatient for regular plodding work. They had sharp wits and much ingenuity, by which they imposed upon the public; they must have possessed great powers of endurance in suffering wet and cold, together with wonderful constitutions, to stand, as they frequently did, all day in their wet clothes, afterwards drying themselves before the fire, and sleeping in the same garments. It struck me that many of them had fallen from a higher position than that of ordinary peasants, and had sunk down to their present low level. One would scarcely suppose that men who had known better days could be so cheerful, and feel at home in such a degraded condition; but so it was, and I suppose is so still.

I observed one of these so-called "gentlemen" trying to sit cross-legged upon a table, like a tailor. In conversation with him I perceived that his accent and speech by no means agreed with his outward appearance; added to this, the very awkward way in which he held his needle told tales, and quite confirmed the suspicions which were rising in my mind.

I said to him: "I think I can work as well as that; where is your thimble?"

"I have one somewhere," he replied; "but I find that I can get on better without it." He was mending a hole or rent in his coat, cobbling it up in a rough manner.

I said, "I wonder you mend your clothes: people will not pity you so much, will they?"

"Oh, the thing cuts two ways: some people give because I mend up my rags and am a very careful man. We can get round them this way as well as the t'other." This he said, looking at me with a very knowing expression on his countenance, which hitherto had been dejected and thoughtful. I found out that this poor man was thoroughly sick and tired of his manner of life, and deeply regretted the prospects he had thrown away. The remembrance of the past stung him with remorse, and in his despair he had tried to cheer himself with drink.

I said, "Did you ever try prayer when you were miserable?"

"No, no; that is laying it on too thick. I have not got to that yet. A fellow like me praying! Why, the very idea of it would set me laughing."

"Yet," I said, "there is really no way out of trouble but by prayer. Satan knows this; therefore he will do all he can to keep you from praying, and will set others to laugh at you if you do. I would not be hindered by that if I were you. God says in the Bible, 'Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me' (Ps. l. 15). It does not signify what your trouble is, or how it came, whether by yourself or others; Satan brought it, and God can bless it if you will let Him."

This was quite a new idea to him. After a little pause he said, "No, hang it! I can't come that dodge at all. I can do a lot of things, but I can't come that."

"I suppose you have not had distress and trouble enough yet; you must sink lower still before you break down."

"Well," he said, "I don't know about that; I have had trouble enough to break a dozen hearts, and I suppose I have broken one."

I was so intensely interested in the man, that I did not observe the "gentlemen" and "ladies" round the fire had ceased to relate their exploits, and were looking at us. The "gentleman" on the table was evidently aware of this, for he said abruptly, "I'll promise you that I will not drink to-night, and I will come and see you anywhere you like to name to-morrow."

Poor man! He came and told me that he was obliged to drink himself to sleep at nights. He was ultimately restored to a respectable position, and became a reformed character. He had no relish, however, for spirituality; and I had none for anything that came short of it.

I could tell of many others who were rescued from this and similar places. One of these was an ex-officer in the army who had lost his position through drink; his wife had died of a broken heart. He was obliged to go to the workhouse, where he would have remained had he not been separated from his daughter. He came out and spent his time on the tramp with this delicate young lady. Poor child! how she cried and begged to be taken out of such a life. "Make us servants, or anything. My father would make a good footman; and I will be housemaid, or go into the kitchen." The man died soon after—I have every reason to hope at peace with God—and his daughter became a true lover of the Lord. "Ah," she said, "a mother's prayers have followed me all along."

CHAPTER III.

The Work Begun.

1863.

AFTER a long night of troubled sleep, I awoke in the morning rather disheartened, and tempted to give up the work altogether. Better men, and more persevering ones, had tried it, and failed; why should I hope to succeed, and what would be the end of my success, if I had it? Happily, with my morning prayer and reading, these dark clouds dispersed. At family worship, I was led by the subject we were considering, to say that introspection was very discouraging to the Christian; that we ought to look away from self to Christ, who is our Life: that for our work we ought to look not to our talents, gifts, and resources, but to Him who alone can use them aright. The work is His, not ours; and we may be sure that, whatever He means us to do, He will open up the way, and provide the necessary help and strength, if we continue to trust Him.

I was getting happy with these thoughts, for although uttering them myself, still I felt they were being spoken *to* me. I therefore confessed how dejected I had been in the morning, and tempted to give up; but now, I said, God was telling me two things—that my life was not my own, neither was the work. Christ is my Life, and He also is the Worker of the work. Confession is always better than profession. As I went on speaking some of the family were moved to tears, and the power of the Lord was present with us. I prayed, and praised God. One member of the family was awakened that morning, though she did not say anything about it till some days after, when she could hold out no longer. So it is, when we are low and empty, the Lord can use our testimony.

After breakfast, I set off to visit the sick people whom I had promised to see. At first I rather shrank from going into these dens of dirt and stench alone, but I braced myself up with the recollection that I was "not alone." I then went forward, praying the Lord to give me the right word.

I had made a special mark against the name of a dying shoemaker in the street. Indeed, I had felt condemned in leaving him the day before, because he seemed so ill, and was so ignorant. The Scripture-reader rather blamed me at the time for asking this man so many questions: he said, "It only tempts them to tell one lie after another."

I said, "He is very ignorant; and I am afraid he will not live till to-morrow."

"Oh," he replied, "he has been as bad as that for a long time." So I passed on then, intending to visit him early in the morning.

I can give no description of the state of the atmosphere on entering the house, before any windows or doors had been opened: it gave me quite a turn. Nevertheless, I went in to see the poor sick man. He looked pale and very ill, and was so afraid of the cold that he would not have the window opened; he even asked me to close the door. I was not surprised that such a sick man as he should be dying in such an atmosphere; I only wondered that his wife, who professed to be well, was not dying too. The poor man was starved in respect of nourishment as well as air. But his soul was in a worse condition even than his body. I scarcely knew at which end to begin. He was too poor to secure the services of any medical man, except the parish doctor: that gentleman had already given him up, and told him he would die.

This, however, did not harass or alarm him. In his ignorance he thought he was sure to go to heaven, because he had "suffered a sight in this 'ere world." I suggested that people did not go to heaven because of their sufferings here, but for what Christ had suffered on their behalf. He was very unwilling to give up his hope, though it was so groundless; for he had been cheering himself, poor man, with the fancied prospect. It was hard to take away the little comfort he had—still I could not help trying my best to do so. I spoke to him about salvation, and the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ; and told him that he was a lost sinner.

"Oh no!" he replied; "I'm not lost at all,—not I; nor do I mean to be. Poor people don't go to hell, as far as I knows; it's only the rich. I'm sure on it, for I've read it somewhere in the Scripture, that they have their good things in this 'ere world, and the poor have their bad things. All this is going to be changed in the world to come." He persisted that he was not a sinner; no, certainly not. He was not like many in that street: he had not done as they did—drink, fight, steal, and swear—everything but murder; that they did too sometimes. He was not a sinner: he had had bad health, to be sure; but he had struggled hard to maintain himself and his wife, and had worked till the hammer dropped out of his hand, and he could sit up no longer. As to being saved in this world, that was an absurd doctrine; he would never believe that. He thought that such doctrines made more hypocrites than anything else. He was quite sure he should be safe enough when he got to heaven, and he did not care for a better salvation than that!

I asked him if he ever prayed. "Well," he said, "you have asked a lot of questions, and you ain't satisfied, even yet; I can't answer any more, I'm too ill." I told him that no one went to heaven if he was not a praying man. "Of course I'm a praying man; I says a great many prayers, and some very good ones too."

But he would not tell me what they were, so I offered to pray with him. How to kneel down in that dreadful place I did not know; and to bring my face nearer to that bed was very distressing. However, down I went, and soon forgot all about my outward troubles. I told the Lord as plainly as I could about the poor man, his darkness of soul, and serious illness. Not that He did not know these things, but I did it for the sake of the poor sufferer, that he might hear it (see John xi. 42). I besought God to open his eyes by the power of the Holy Spirit, to show him his dangerous condition, and also the great salvation there was for him in Christ Jesus.

When I first commenced to speak in prayer the poor fellow was very restless, and resented the things I was saying about him. He muttered to himself something to this effect: "It's no good praying like that; I ain't as bad as all that," and so on. When I rose from my knees, his wife and he looked at me as if they thought I must know all about them. She thanked me, and he asked me to come again. "Come," he said, "this afternoon." I promised I would do so.

Leaving a text with him, I went out and took a rapid walk into a more open and airy street. Then I returned to visit other sick people who were on my list; but these did not engage or interest me so much. For the most part they appeared to lie on the "watch" or "catch" for what they could get. They told me of their pains and various distresses, in order to gain my sympathy and move me to give them temporal relief, rather than spiritual advice. It is very difficult to combine these two good works; and more difficult not to do so. In a few instances I gave money; the news of this quickly spread, so that I was sent for to many houses, to my perplexity and manifest deception.

In the afternoon I returned to the poor shoemaker, who was now in a very different state of mind from that in which he had been in the morning. Then he wished to die; now he was afraid lest he should die before he was saved. He wept much when I told him of God's love for sinners, and His willingness to forgive them for Jesus' sake. I prayed with him again, thanking God for opening his eyes thus far, and felt much encouraged by the change I perceived in him, for I was sure that the Lord had really taken him in hand. After a little further conversation, and bidding him trust in God, I went away, promising to return in an hour or two. I did so, and encouraged this dear man to thank God for saving his soul, and also for prolonging his life till the good news of salvation had reached him.

"Oh, wife," he exclaimed, "only think, if I had died before, I should have been lost for ever; but now, thank the Lord, I'm saved. I'm so happy!"

I went for the Scripture-reader, to come and rejoice with us, but he was not to be found; perhaps it was as well, for afterwards, when I told him what had passed, he said that he had no faith in such conversions. Nevertheless, I am sure I was not mistaken in the case of this poor man. I was quite wonderful to hear him rejoicing and praising God; giving expression to thoughts the very opposite of what he had uttered in the morning.

Before I left the street in the evening, I went once more, and for the fourth time, to visit my patient. I found him rejoicing in a marvellous way, with several people in his room, to whom he was telling his experience. I am persuaded that the Lord saved that soul; and I was greatly comforted and encouraged with His seal to my ministry on the first day of my work, which happened also to be my birthday.

From this I went to a so-called prayer-meeting, hoping for an opportunity to thank God publicly for saving that poor shoemaker. But it turned out to be a meeting at which one man read a hymn (there being no one to sing it), then a portion of Scripture, with an explanation. After this he offered a lengthy prayer, and dismissed us. Notwithstanding this dull meeting, I went home rejoicing in the Lord, thanking Him for the soul He had given me, and for other tokens of His presence on this day.

When I reached home, the friend with whom I was staying told me that in the course of the afternoon she had heard of a lady who was in a very melancholy state: would I call and see her?

"Certainly," I said, "I will do so, if you please; but I suppose it is too late this evening." "Oh no," she replied, "it is not too late; do come." I consented, and we set off together.

On our arrival, I tried to cheer the desponding one. She told me that she had been unhappy ever since hearing a sermon from a stranger on the subject of the wedding garment, some three months before.

"What did he say?" I inquired. "Oh, he described my case exactly. I am 'bound hand and foot, and being carried to outer darkness.' I was very angry with him at the time, and amongst many others called on the vicar of the parish, begging him not to take that man for his curate. I have been wretched ever since."

"Let me tell you, for your comfort," I said, "that at any rate you are not bound hand and foot now, whatever may have been your case before. You are no longer speechless, for you acknowledge yourself to be at the feast without the wedding garment. Suppose the King were to say to you now, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither?' what would you say?"

"I never knew anything about this wedding garment before."

"Then, let us ask Him to give it to you without delay."

She complied; and when once she was willing to take the sinner's place her eyes were speedily opened to see her personal interest in the work of Christ. She began to thank Him for it. Having assured her of her pardon, I was able to show that by the same Lord Jesus all that believe in Him are justified—that pardon and justification go together (see Acts xiii. 38, 39). She was not only pardoned, but accounted righteous before God, for Christ's sake. This, I said, was the blessing represented in the figure of the wedding garment.

I did not tell her till afterwards that I was the stranger who preached that obnoxious sermon; but I could not help wondering, and thanked God for His kindness in giving me another token of His remembrance at this time and on this particular day.

The next morning I rose with a thankful heart, praying that this, my first Sunday, which was the Epiphany, might be a day of the manifestation of Christ with much power and blessing to the benighted place in which I had come to work. Truly, "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." First, I went to see my converted shoemaker, and found him very happy. He had spent a joyful night in praising God, and intended sending for his neighbours that day to tell them what great things the Lord had done for his soul.

As I passed along the street, while the church-bell was ringing, I invited the loiterers to come with me. Some of them laughed aloud at the idea; others, mocking, said, "Oh yes, we'll come. We're all on us coming!" Another man suggested that he would come if I paid him; "that is the way to get us along to church." This remark caused much merriment. I stopped, and said that I thought they ought to pay me for coming to do them good. "Oh," exclaimed one of them, "the Government pays you well enough, no fear; if the truth were known, they gives you a lot for us besides, if yer did not keep it all for yerself." He was evidently, to his own mind at least, a knowing fellow; and undoubtedly he was a great authority and ringleader in that crowd. "Time will show who is right," I said, and passed on, inviting others as I went.

On arriving at the church, I was grieved to find but a few people there. They were respectably dressed, and not like those I had seen in the street. After the service I took a chair, and, standing on it at the church-door, I spoke to the crowd outside. They were very quiet, and gave me a patient hearing.

In the evening we had a larger congregation, and I felt more encouraged. As I was reading the First Lesson, my attention was arrested by a verse which so touched my heart that it brought tears to my eyes before I was aware. It was Isa. xlix. 20, "The children which thou shalt have, after thou

PREACHING TO THE CROWD OUTSIDE. *See page 24.*

hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell." I could not help reading it a second time; then I stopped, and told the people, by way of comment, that I had come from a large congregation of very dear people in Cornwall. "Look here," I said, "the Lord is telling me in this verse that, instead of them, He will give me others here; and that this place will be too strait for us. I believe this!" Then I went on with the service.

I had much liberty in preaching the Word that evening, and declared that my expectation was not from my preaching, but from the Lord through His Word, which was sharper than any two-edged sword, and must cut (Heb. iv. 12). It will either cut sin from the soul; or the soul, sins and all, from God.

After the sermon, I had an after-meeting, to which some remained. I told them that I had been delivering an invitation from God; and now this second meeting was intended to give them the opportunity of accepting it. When John the Baptist preached to the people they came to him afterwards, and said, "What shall we do?" Nothing cheered an earnest preacher so much as hearing people say, "What must I do to be saved?" Did any of them wish to be saved to-night? There was no response. After a few more words I gave out a hymn, saying that I hoped by the time we had sung it some one would have courage enough to say, "I wish to be saved." Still no one spoke. I continued, "Is there no one who desires to be prayed for before we close the service?" "Yes," said a voice; "pray for me." Then a beggar-man came to the front, and knelt down at the rails of the communion-table; there he began to cry to the Lord to have mercy on his soul. This evidently was not the first time he had been to a meeting of the kind, for he understood all about it. He pleaded earnestly with God for some time, till he professed to have found peace: he then gave thanks with a loud voice. Some of the people became excited at this, but I was too much engaged to attend to them.

At the close of the meeting the converted beggar gave me his name, saying that he should like to speak to me the next day. Accordingly, I saw him, and he told me his sad story of wretchedness and despair, and thanked God for present salvation. Upon asking him to bear a good testimony among the people, he said, "No, they will never believe me,—I know they won't; I will do so anywhere else, but not here."

He went away, and I did not see him again for more than two years. He was then in the hospital, a dying man, but very happy, and rejoicing in the prospect of his speedy departure. "Thank the Lord," he said, "that I ever heard you. God bless your labours more and more in that wicked place!"

CHAPTER IV.

The "Week of Prayer."

1861.

THE second week of my work in Bath happened to be the "Week of Prayer"—a time set apart for united supplication, all over the Christian world, for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is a simple, yet a grand thought, that the year should begin with a simultaneous pleading for one and the same object; and that—the power so absolutely necessary for spiritual work. The movement came from God Himself, as the result has proved; though instrumentally it was sent out by some then unknown missionary labouring at an equally unknown place in the vast mission-fields of India.

I refer to the subject of United Prayer here, because it is characteristic of the period in which we live, and is one of the distinctive features of the work of God in this century.

In the sixteenth century it pleased God to raise up men who specially preached "Justification by Faith" alone; that is, without the intervention of priest and sacrament. This was taught in spite of the established power of the Papacy.

In the seventeenth century, men were raised up who wrote chiefly on the subjects of Sanctification and Union with Christ.

In the eighteenth century, God raised up men, simultaneously and unknown to one another—such as Brainerd, Whitefield, the Wesleys, and others—to bring people, not from the legal bondage of Romanism, but from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith.

In the present century we have these important subjects united. We declare Justification by Faith—the grand doctrine of the Reformation; we set forth Sanctification by Faith; and we also preach these truths with a view to produce experimental results. But the chief characteristic of our age, as distinguished from every preceding one (besides the expectation of the Return of the Lord), is the spirit of unity that binds workers together. Satan, it is true, is busy in making many and very apparent divisions; but, in spite of these, there is more real spiritual unity than at any former period. And we see that where Christians are united, God's Spirit is more largely poured out, and His work prospers accordingly.

For twenty years I have observed the effect of this UNITED PRAYER, and must acknowledge that the work of God has received a manifest and increasing impulse. There never was a time in the history of the Church when there were more believers, more true Gospel preaching, more praise and testimony for God, than the present. The "coming of the Lord draweth nigh," and the Sun of Righteousness is about to arise with healing in His wings; consequently, we have light spreading and songs abounding. Surely the cry has gone forth, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" Surely the Lord is even now standing at the door.

This year it was announced in Bath that the Week of Prayer would be observed. Unhappily, the Church people and the Dissenters had their *united* meetings in separate places, if not at different times. This was not a good omen for successful prayer; still, it was well that the week should be kept at all.

On the Monday evening I went to the Church of England meeting, and was introduced to several of my clerical brethren. In conversing with one of them, he told me that the meeting was for special prayer for the outpouring of the Divine Spirit upon the city. This had a refreshing sound, and delighted me. I went on to ask whether they had already received any droppings of a shower. I suppose I was unfortunate in the person I addressed, for he said he did "not quite take in my meaning." I asked him more plainly, "Have you had any conversions?"

"Oh yes," he replied; "I suppose God does that!"

I said, "In Cornwall, when we met together to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit, we expected it; and what is more, we received it. The believers praised God; and sinners cried aloud for mercy."

"We never have such a thing as that here," he said.

"Suppose while we are praying the Lord answers prayer, and sends down His Spirit, and the people are moved to cry out, 'What must I do to be saved?' How would you act then?"

"Oh," said one who had been quietly listening to our conversation, "we do not allow such things: we should at once send for the police and have them put out."

I said, "A little girl who once heard the prayer for rain in church in the morning, came out on a fine Sunday evening with a big umbrella. When the vicar met her, he said, 'Well, my little girl, what is the umbrella for?' 'Please, sir,' she said, dropping a curtsy, 'did you not pray for rain this morning?'"

"We have no Cornish girls here," he replied, laughing: then looking at his watch, said, "It is time to go in."

On entering the hall we found a large company assembled. The chairman took his seat, and we clergymen arranged ourselves on the platform near him. After a few introductory remarks about the whole world being girded with prayer, he gave out a hymn (hymns were not so freely used in those days as they are now). It was a long metre; but there was no one there to lead the singing, and the chairman seemed somewhat perplexed: so I began, and led off triumphantly with the tune to Keble's evening hymn. The people joined heartily, and supported me. Then followed a long prayer, about a great many good things, but with scarcely an allusion to the special object for which we had met. After this, a portion of Scripture was read, with an exposition; the exegesis was unexceptionable. We then had another long and beautiful prayer, and the chairman gave out a second hymn, looking quietly at me, as if I were the accredited precentor of the evening. I rose to the occasion, and led off again. It was well for me that they had no more singing that evening, for these two were the only tunes I knew in the world.*

This chilly meeting was concluded with the benediction, exactly as the minute hand reached the hour. I must confess, it seemed to me that nothing had been done or said that would or could "move the Hand that moves the world" to send down a blessing upon the city.

These meetings of Churchmen were continued, I believe, throughout the week; but I did not attend any more. In another part of the city the Nonconformists were holding their gatherings. Unknown and unintroduced, I went into one of these to see how they were conducted. Here I was disappointed even more than before; for my idea of Dissenters was very different to what I now beheld. I had, it is true, only seen Wesleyans in Cornwall; but I had a supposition that all who separated from the Church did so because they had an exuberance of life. Here I heard nothing but platitudes or eloquent utterances. There was much display of oratory, and one speaker vied with another in using difficult words and long sentences. I noticed that each of them concluded with the verse of a hymn or poem, before he sat down exhausted, while the people applauded. Their prayers were as oratorical as their speeches, and I confess I felt very small in the midst of this display. It was far beyond my reach. I could no more compete with this kind of thing than I could fly.

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* I was much amused at the idea that I should make my first public appearance in Bath as a leader of singing! Only a few years before I had gone to a master to be taught, and after I had paid him several guineas I asked if he thought I was getting on.

"Oh no!" he said, "you will never sing: you have no idea of it; nor any voice either!"

"Why did you not tell me this before, then?"

"Because," he said drily, "that is no business of mine, if you like to come."

Of course I had no more lessons; but feeling very much the need of singing at my meetings, I begged the Lord to teach me, if it were only one tune. He was pleased to teach me two—a long and a common metre; and these were the two which came out on this and many subsequent occasions. My Bath friends, noticing the fact, compared me to "a barrel organ with only two tunes." I then besought the Lord for more efficiency in this most useful accomplishment: and, thank God, since that time I have had no difficulty in learning tunes, and can venture to recommend all believers to ask God to teach them, as I did; for I think that He wishes all His children to sing.

The year before this we had had a Week of Prayer at Hayle. There, we commenced at five o'clock in the morning, by desire of those who were obliged to go to work at six. We had a meeting again at mid-day, and another in the evening. The thought that Christians were praying all over the world at the same time, for the same thing, stirred the hearts of our men; and before the third day was over the flame had kindled, and the Lord who answers by fire was present in power. While believers rejoiced with joy unspeakable—though very vociferously, sinners cried aloud for mercy. It brought a fresh burst of revival amongst us, which went on for several weeks.

In contrasting Bath with Cornwall, I could not help thinking that in the former place people prayed from their heads, and in the latter from their hearts: here, out of their own thoughts and knowledge, and there by the inspiration of the Spirit. In the one place they were calm and self-possessed; in the other, carried quite beyond themselves. In the one, the prayers were very beautiful, very eloquent, very scriptural, but *very dead;* in the other, they were neither beautiful nor eloquent, and sometimes in the people's humble ignorance not very scriptural; but, "blessed blunders" and all, they were powerful, downright, hearty, and effectual. Men who could not make a speech upon any subject whatever, were able on their knees to shake the whole place when they prayed. Their souls soared away on strong wings to regions altogether beyond this world. Theirs were prayers that came from the heart, and brought out spontaneous responses from hearts lifted by the same Spirit.

The more I saw and heard of some of the ministry in Bath at that time, the more distressed I was. Popularity, dignity, and eloquence, without spirituality, were to me like sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. It was grievous to see large congregations absorbed in listening to sermons which were more for entertainment or instruction than for awakening. It is indeed sad to see souls unwarned of their danger, and, even worse than that, allowed to remain in ignorance of it, and also of the way of escape. Satan himself could not wish anything better than such an empty Gospel. Romanism might be exposed, and Tractarianism proved to be a sham and unreality, but the "full Gospel," as it was called, enunciated by a beautiful, eloquent, and evangelical preacher, was regarded as perfectly safe. It was high treason to breathe a word against such preaching: nevertheless, I thought it most dangerous, and think so still; and I believe that it grieves God even more than other teaching. He has compassion upon those who are ignorant and out of the way, but we read that "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. i. 18).

When I looked on some congregations I thought to myself, Surely, the prophet has prophesied to the bones, and the flesh has come up upon them, and the skin has covered them above; but there is no breath in them (Ezek. xxxvii. 8). They needed the wind to breathe upon the slain that they might live, and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army. So much for eloquent "evangelical" preachers, who appeared to be satisfied with attentive congregations; though there were no conversions: plenty of the *word* of the Spirit, without any of the *work* of the Spirit!

What could I do—small as I felt among these giants; little and unknown—against people of influence and position? I was as one out of my depth, battling against overwhelming forces. The district in which I was placed was difficult enough; but to work there on different lines to those which were customary, looked like setting up myself against the intelligence and goodness of this great city! Nevertheless, I determined to go on—not, of course, to oppose others, but to persevere in seeking definitely the salvation of souls. In pursuing this course I was not without many tokens of blessing and assurance from God that I was doing His work; or rather, that He was doing it by me.

One Sunday morning, after the service, a steady, thoughtful-looking man came to me, and said that he had wished to give his heart to God for several years; but now he was afraid it was too late.

"Oh no," I said; "*now* is always the accepted time: by and by may be too late, but 'to-day is the day of salvation.'"

"Yes," he said, looking sadly on the ground, "I know that is the Scripture."

"Well, the Scripture is for you as well as for me."

"Ah, yes; but I shall be a ruined man if I give my heart to God *now*; for I should have to give up my shop."

"Would it not be better," I interposed, "to be ruined in this world than the next?"

He went on, in a whisper, to tell me that his shop was a place for receiving stolen goods: he knew it was wrong, but somehow he had got into that trade, and it was difficult to get out of it.

Upon further inquiry he informed me that he had been awakened in Brighton some three years before. At that time he went to a clergyman there, and said he was anxious about his soul. It would appear that this dear man was perplexed, and wanted to know what his visitor had done. He hoped that he had not committed murder or anything of that kind. He bade him come again the next day; and on hearing that he wished to serve the Lord, the clergyman thought he wanted to be a missionary, and promised to do all he could to help him. Finding this was not the case, he gave him a Bible and told him to "read that." The more he did so the more wretched he became, till his friends thought he would go out of his mind, and urged him to go into business. Now he had a shop for "marine stores"—not that his goods came from the sea, or had anything to do with the ocean, but so it was called.

I advised him to go on with business on honest principles; but whether he carried it on or not, to give his heart to God, and not to mind anything else for the present. He had been anxious for so long, and at times was so miserable, that he did as I told him, and was not long before he found peace.

In the evening he was more quiet than I liked, and when I spoke to him about it he said: "The people all know what kind of a shop I keep. You wait till next Sunday. I'll tell them about my conversion then—see if I don't."

On Monday morning he went early to the Christian Knowledge Society's depôt, and bought a number of texts in large type—"Thou, God, seest me," "Thou shalt not steal," "God is Love," and others. These he displayed in conspicuous parts of his shop before the customers arrived; and when they came one by one, he pointed them to the texts, and shook his head. He told me that some of the people were "scared;" others stood and swore at him as "a double-grained hypocrite;" and one said, "Who would be a Christian after that?"

However, in a short time it was well known that he was a changed man, and the character of his business was changed also. Gradually he worked himself into a good business, and was able to give employment to many. Sometimes I sent him promising beggars, at his own request; and while they were busy he talked to them about their souls.

This man was a great help to me, and in many respects better than a curate could have been. He visited the sick, held prayer-meetings, preached in the open-air, and stirred up the people in all directions to attend the services.

Besides this, he found out an old Christian man somewhere, and persuaded him to come and live in the street. This dear old man prayed aloud in our meetings with such power and reality (something like a Cornishman) that he roused us all greatly. One day a nervous gentleman who happened to be present, went up and touched him while he was engaged in a loud prayer, and said, "My good man, God is not deaf!"

"What?" said the old man, waking up as if from a dream; "no, I'm sure He ain't: but sinners is!" and then he went on again louder than before.

These two men worked together heartily and well, and reached many people and places I could not. Thus the Lord gave me help and encouragement in the time of need.

CHAPTER V.

Bible Readings.

1861.

IN spite of numerous discouragements and difficulties, I went on working in my little church and district with unceasing energy. I found that the Scripture-reader's depression of mind was by no means without cause. He had been deceived by the people so often and so long that he despaired of them altogether. They were indeed a very perplexing charge; nevertheless, in the midst of much dross, which looked brilliant for a time, we found here and there real metal—some true cases. Among other persons who were brought in, I will mention the case of a young lady, who afterwards became very helpful in the work.

In the last chapter I remarked how grieved I was to see so much profession with so little reality; so much knowledge and so little experience. Now it pleased God to bring to my church a striking illustration of this very kind. A lady who had good intentions and much knowledge, who had heard the best of sermons from the most eloquent of preachers, and had made volumes of notes, was drawn by curiosity, having heard of strange things which were said to be done in my church. When she came, she saw it was but a small place and not full; and, as she afterwards told me, the sermon was "neither eloquent nor particular." At the close of the service the people were asked to remain to an after-meeting. This she could not understand, and asked the doorkeeper what it meant. He bade her "stop and see." She did so.

On observing a stranger at the end of the church, I made my way down to her, and asked whether she had given her heart to God? She replied that she "did not know what I meant."

I said, "Do you know any people who have given their hearts to the world? Have you seen how the world lays hold of them and carries them off?"

"Yes, indeed I have," she replied; for she had sisters and brothers at home who lived for nothing else.

"In the same way," I said, "if you give your heart to God, who is really entitled to it, He can take it and employ you for Himself and His work. Would you like to give yourself to Him?"

"I was never asked the question before."

"Well, it is time you were; you had better think about it, and I will come to you again presently."

As I was going away she put her hand on my sleeve to detain me, and said, "What shall I do?"

"Kneel down, and give your heart to God at once. Say, 'Lord, take my heart; and give me Thy Holy Spirit, for Jesus Christ's sake.'"

Deliberately and quietly she knelt down, and I prayed with her. As I was leaving she said, "Thank you," and soon after went away. I did not know who she was or where she came from.

The third day after this she called at my house with a note to tell me she had obtained peace with God and was very happy. I opened the door and bade her come in, and we thanked God together. I then asked her if she did not wish to thank God in her life as well as with her lips, and whether she would help us in the work in Avon Street. She was willing, but shrank from the task, saying, "I am so ignorant. I used to think I knew a great deal, but now I feel I know nothing as I should. I have no experience." I showed her the text in Acts xxvi. 16—"For I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." "There, you see, God wishes you to be a witness only of what you have seen; and then He will show you more."

She promised to come and make a beginning, but, before leaving, asked whether I would consent to hold a Bible-class if she could prevail upon a few others to attend. I readily and thankfully agreed to do this, and arranged to open a weekly Bible-reading. This began with ten persons, but speedily increased till it was necessary to have two a week, and afterwards more than that.

Seeing that those I had to deal with in this class needed experimental more than head knowledge, I first endeavoured to set before them the difference between these two things. In head-knowledge you hold the truth; in experimental, the truth holds you. The ground in the garden will hold a stone that is buried in it, and keep it safely and well; but if you put a seed into the earth, striking root, it will lay hold of the ground and begin to grow. So we may hold the Word of God in the way the stone is held, retaining it in our memories or note-books; or the Word may sink into our hearts, and, taking root there, spring up and bring forth fruit in our lives.

For example, I may know and believe the fact that Jesus Christ died for me, and may philosophize about it, and think and theorize on the doctrine; or I may thank God for His love in giving His Son, and the Son of God for His love in dying for me. The effect of the former is nought; but that of the latter is to bring me into joy and liberty. The one is what is called objective, and the other subjective; the one is theoretical, the other experimental.

After this explanation, I bade my class ask questions till they understood my meaning. They all professed to believe that Christ died for them. I said, "How is it possible for you to believe this, and not give thanks?" Then I urged them to thank the Lord as well as they could, till they could do it better. Praying is like *knocking* at a door for admission; understanding the way of salvation is like *looking* into an open door; but thanking God is like *going in* over the threshold. Suppose there is a wall, and salvation is inside, the gate through which you enter is praise. I can never feel I have salvation while I am praying for it, or while I only understand about it; but the feeling can easily come while I am thanking God because I have it. (See Ps. cxviii. 19, and Isa. xxvi. 2.)

Altogether this was a very encouraging meeting; and some of those present did begin to thank God that day. They believed with the heart unto righteousness, and confessed with the mouth unto salvation (Rom. x. 10). One wonders why all did not!

The next week I took the first chapter of the Gospel of John, which very much amused some of those who attended. They said, "It was just like going to Sunday-school again," "It was elementary," and so on. But for all that, this A B C was the very thing that many of those giants in Scripture knowledge needed. At this meeting I particularly dwelt on the fact that Christ was come not only to give spiritual life, but that He Himself should be our life—that the life is the light, not the light the life. This touched some to the quick, and they were inclined to dispute the point, or rather the use I made of it. However, the words in the fourth verse bore me out beyond all contradiction. I told them plainly, that in order to understand heavenly or spiritual truths, we must *believe* them first; though for earthly things it might be necessary to *understand* before we can believe. Heavenly things were altogether beyond our ken, or the possibility of our discovery; for this reason they are revealed to us on the veracity and authority of God. We must bow to Him before He will teach us.

What a mystery it is that Christ was in the world and the world knew Him not; that He came to His own, and His own received Him not! So it is now: the world lives as if Christ were a myth. Among professing Christians, even of the evangelical type, there are many who have not received Him experimentally. They have no "assurance," as they call it. What a marvellous thing it is that the light shines in the darkness, and that the darkness comprehends it not—that the sun is shining in the sky, and yet it is night! It is because the natural man cannot comprehend spiritual things: he is blind as well as dead. He needs spiritual faculties to perceive spiritual things; for "Except a man be born again he cannot *see* the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). Seeing is a conscious and intentional act; and just as the looking at the brazen serpent brought life to the dying Israelite, so there is life and pardon for us who are dead in trespasses and sins, by looking at the Crucified One.

We came again to the same conclusion as at the previous meeting, namely, the necessity of surrender. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name"

(John i. 12). When our eyes are open we behold the glory of the Word made flesh, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (See John i. 14.)

This time we had more discussion, and a little more opposition: but that was not all, thank God; for some yielded themselves to Him, and found joy and peace in believing.

On the next occasion I dwelt on the absolute necessity of the forgiveness of sins through the blood of the Lamb. "The Jew," I said, "never thought of such a thing as obtaining forgiveness by saying that he was very sorry and would never sin again. He knew that he must bring a lamb for an offering, and that after he had laid his hands on its head, confessing his sin, he must shed its blood. When he saw the blood flow he was sure there was remission for him. So we must look beyond our sins at the blood of the Lamb of God, which has been shed once for all to make atonement for us."

It is interesting to notice how intently the Lord Himself dwelt upon this subject. While He was dying on the cross, surrounded by the tumult and distraction of the mob, He never for a moment lost sight of this one point. When He felt the warm blood flowing down His arms from those cruel wounds in His hands, and coursing down His face from the crown of thorns, He cried, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." That blood, while it was yet warm, availed for the dying thief, and avails still for us; it will never lose its power till all the ransomed Church of God are saved. There is no other way of pardon, nor can we say, "We have found the Christ" until we are pardoned. When we have, by the mercy of God, obtained this pardon, the very least we can do is to go and call our friends, as Andrew went to call his brother Simon. (John i. 41.)

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness in the original material creation, hath in the same order and way shined into our hearts in the new creation, that we may give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. iv. 6). He does not shine on us merely to show us our chaos state; but to reveal Himself, that we may show Him or His light to others who are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death.

Having such frequent meetings my two tunes were getting somewhat used up; so a young lady was asked to come and sing for us. She certainly *did sing;* and people stopped to listen to her instead of singing themselves. She was tall, handsome, and very fashionably dressed, with bows and ends here, there, and everywhere. After this meeting she was asked to come again.

"Oh," she replied, "I really cannot do it, and go to balls and parties too!"

"Then why not give them up?"

"I would do it this moment," she said emphatically, "if my mother would allow me."

Humanly speaking, there was no chance of that, so we lost our interesting songstress.

Some months afterwards I was asked to go and see this same young lady, who was supposed to be dying. Her mother met me on the stairs, weeping, and said, "The doctor has given her up; oh, what shall I do?" I found her very low and weak, but, to my joy, she seemed anxious to know the Saviour, and asked me various questions respecting what she had heard at the Bible-reading. She wished me to tell her again the difference between head-knowledge and heart-experience; for she said, "I am not satisfied with what I have. What is this heart-experience?"

I asked if she had ever felt herself to be a lost sinner. "Have you ever had any conviction of sin?" She did not quite understand my question, but she remembered that some years before she had heard a text given out by a clergyman whom she knew: "To me to live is Christ; and to die is gain." She was surprised by the words, and thought within herself, "I could not say that. To me to live is the world; and to die would be to lose my soul and go to hell!"

"Do go on," I said; "I am deeply interested."

After resting for a little time, she continued: "I do not know what came to me, but I heard no more of that sermon. I was lost in a reverie or prayer; my mind was in a kind of revolution. How the time passed I do not know;

but when the service was over, the organ played and the people went away. Seeing that I did not move, my friends came forward, though I begged them to leave me alone. They thought I was faint, and insisted on dragging me out into the open air, and using restoratives. This completely broke up all my impressions; before I reached home they had gone, and have never returned since, though I have had some bitter sorrows."

I told her that without doubt her impressions were the work of the Spirit. Taking her back to the same text, I showed her that in Adam we are all dead and lost; that we need to be changed and brought to Christ, who is our Life, by a new birth; that He died on purpose to procure life for us, and shed His blood to obtain our pardon. "Can you believe that He died for you?" I asked. She prayed; she believed; and rejoiced. At the end of my visit, instead of being exhausted, she was greatly revived, physically as well as spiritually.

I thanked God, and left her, promising to see her again shortly. I said, "I do not think you are going to die: I will give you this text—'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord'" (Psa. cxviii. 17).

Going downstairs, her parents called me into the dining-room, and asked what I thought of her. I said, "You had better go up and see for yourselves; she is rejoicing in the forgiveness of her sins."

"Oh dear, oh dear!" exclaimed her mother; "she will die! she will die! What shall I do? Oh, sir, cannot you pray God to spare her life?"

"Well," I said, hesitating, "if He does, you will only want her to go into the world again, and dress in the fashion. She had far better die, and go to heaven."

"Oh no; I give you my word and honour, sir, that if God spares her life she shall be religious, if you like."

"Very well," I said; "let us pray."

They both knelt down, and I prayed God to spare her life and let her live to His glory.

The next day I called, and found her better in health and still rejoicing in God. It was not long before she recovered and came again to our Bible-readings. She also commenced to work in my district by opening an early morning meeting for prayer and reading the Scriptures. She continued to attend the parish church with her mother, and had her class in the Sunday-school there; but on the week-days she helped me, and that in a most efficient way, as we shall see hereafter. She was one of five ladies from our Bible-readings who worked with me continually in Avon Street.

CHAPTER VI.

The Frost.

1861.

THIS winter was a most inclement one. The frost continued for many weeks; and while those who had time and health for skating amused themselves to their hearts' content, the poor suffered severely. Coals and blankets were in great request in my district, and were generously and abundantly supplied. Unhappily, the rapacity of the people increased with the abundance of the provision. Many of them complained with loud voice, that "no one gave them anything." What was given, many of them regarded as a matter of right, and murmured because they thought others received more. They said, that "some had got a double share, and they only a single one,"—that "honest people did not get half so well helped as rogues."

Relieving these necessitous people, poor and starved as they were, was a thankless task. I have often wondered how I continued to work among them as I did. They regarded me chiefly as one who was paid to wait upon them, and supply their wants. Very often I got it roundly; they gave me "pieces of their mind" for not doing my duty better.

The church was a small, dirty, ill-ventilated place; the street leading to it was dirtier still: the people were worse than all. Yet, I was mercifully kept blind and deaf at the time to all these disagreeables, and worked away as if circumstances were otherwise. This is how the Lord sustains His servants, and keeps them occupied. Notwithstanding these difficulties and drawbacks, I was interested in the people; and my mind was engaged with the various calls of the place.

At that time I had not equal acceptance anywhere else in Bath. I remember on one occasion, when I preached in the Abbey, upon the "full assurance of faith," I was regarded with great suspicion and distrust. When preaching in another part of the city, a lady resented what I had been saying, and remarked; "The very idea of that nasty little man from the tramps' church coming to teach *us!*" But here in the said tramps' church I had free scope; I could speak out all that was in my heart, and work till I dropped.

My Scripture-reader continued steadfast in his opinion, and said, when once the beggars understood that I wanted conversions, they would come and "be converted in shoals." He certainly was right in too many cases; and my disappointments amused him, though I cannot say they had the same effect upon me. I need not trouble the reader with details of these cases, but they were very trying. Nevertheless, as I have before intimated, along with these false conversions we found many true ones.

One day during the frost I was told that a child had been lying dead in one of the houses for a fortnight, and was still unburied. I immediately went to inquire about this, and found the report quite true. There was the poor body, stark and stiff, stowed away under the bed, in a room where a man, his wife, and six children were living day and night. When I remonstrated about this dreadful state of things, the wife said, "she couldn't help it; her mon had promised that he would see about burying on it, but he hadn't done so yet."

Having obtained this information I went in search of the said "mon," and found him loitering with others in the street. I called him aside, and asked if he had a child lying dead and unburied.

"Yes," he said, "I have, but it ain't no business of mine to bury it. What are you paid for, I should like to know?"

I meekly answered that he had never told me of the death of the child, but that I would go and see about the funeral immediately. Without delay I went to the parish officers, who sent a coffin; and also arranged for the funeral that afternoon.

The usual custom on such occasions was to have plenty of intoxicating drink, but I thought that tea would be a change, and be far better; so I provided this repast, and did the whole thing, as they said, "handsome." This little act of kindness did not cost more than three and sixpence; it proved to be money well spent, for it touched the heart of the man. In the evening I saw him at church, sitting at the farther end; the next night he came nearer; and then nearer still, till at last he sat close to the pulpit. We kept our eyes upon him, though we did not speak to him. I was told that he had given up idling, and had taken to work; so one day I went to his house, or rather room, in order to have a little talk, and hear what he had to say. I found him busy over an old umbrella.

"I am glad to see you at work to-day," I said.

"Yes, I'm a working away pretty steady now; we can all on us work if we likes."

"But cannot you find any better work to do than that?"

"Oh, this 'ere does very well. I made fourteen 'bob' of it last week; a man's a fool who can't make fourteen a week any time."

I was curious to know something more about this. He continued, "To begin with, I borrowed a sixpence and bought a old 'brella. Then I took off the torn calico; polished up the whalebones, squared up and varnished the metals, cleaned the stick, and then sold the lot for more than a shillin'. With that I bought more, which I can make a good thing on."

I said, "I am glad to see you come to church too!"

"Yes," he replied thoughtfully, "that's where I was brought up; and I've had no 'appiness since I left."

"Then you are disposed to come back again, are you?"

"Yes, I am quite determined upon that point."

"But," I continued, "you know that reformation will not do by itself."

"Yes," he said, "and I understand that too. Yon's plain enough, no mistake. Any fool can understand your preaching, if he will. I'm converted, I am!"

"Thank God for that!" I replied.

"Yes, indeed I do."

"Have you a Bible?"

"Yes, here he is," he said, holding up a good one with gilt edges, "I got that for a prize at school, but it's been up the 'spout' (the pawn shop) for years."

"Can you read it?"

"Why," he said, "it's a curious thing; I used to be first class in reading, but I've forgotten every letter but that crooked one, S—I can mind that."

He had been well taught in his youth, but had turned out such a "blackguard," as he said, that his parents had ordered him to leave their house.

I inquired if they were still living.

"Yes, my father has a tailor's shop in Bristol—he is a Christian man."

"How rejoiced then he would be to see you again!"

"But he sha'n't," said Joseph, changing his tone and manner, "he sha'n't. He turned me to doors—no, that he sha'n't—never!"

I did not press the point any more then; but in a few days after we got back to the subject. In the meantime Joseph had been to the "spout" once more, and had obtained some good clothes for himself and his wife, which had been "put away" for the purpose of getting drink.

One day when I saw him nicely dressed, I said, "Joseph, I wish you would do me a favour."

"Yes, I know what you're after well enough," he said; "I s'pose you want me to go to Bristol."

"Yes, I do indeed, and will give you a day's pay, and the money for your journey too, if you will go."

"Very well, I'll go to-morrow: but I don't want your money; I've got quite enough o' that."

He went, and when he came back in the evening, he gave me half a sovereign "for the poor." I accepted his offering, and asked him to sit down and tell me all about his journey.

"Well, I went, you know, and when I got to father's shop, my old monkey was up again, and I couldn't go in; so I passed on, because father hadn't treated me kind. Then I thought you would be disappointed like, so I went back a bit; and still I couldn't go in, no not I. Then I went the t'other side o' the road and stood opposite the house, as if I was a waitin' for somebody. Presently I saw mother a lookin' out of the window at me; then she went in, and come again. Then she and father was both a lookin' at me; but I pretended not to know anything. By-and-by father comes out, and looks up and down the street, and goes in again. Then he comes out across the road, and walks round me, pretending to look about for something. At last he says, 'Joseph, is that you?' 'Yes, father,' says I. 'Go inside,' says the old gentleman, a chokin' like. I went in, and then mother comes, and she did make a fuss, sure enough. Altogether they made me feel very queer. I up then and told them I was a Christian now, and that you had sent me to see them. We all three on us had a good cry, and then thanked God together. They made me stop to dinner, and father gave me this 'ere new hat," holding up the article, "and measured me for a new suit. Then, when I was coming away, he made me a present of that half sovereign for myself. The old people is all right again now,—thanks be!"

I said, "I am very glad you have been to see your parents, and now, do you know, I think you are poor enough for me to give this half sovereign for your wife and children." But he would not accept it. He went away with tears in his eyes and his heart very full, for he was not altogether so unfeeling as he pretended to be.

I watched this man and his family with much interest, and they were observed by others also for the remarkable change that had come over them. Joseph himself greatly surprised me by the rapidity with which he regained the art of reading. The letters came back "wonderful quick," he said, when he asked his Heavenly Father to teach him. He remained steadfast, and bore a good testimony. Subsequently his parents sent for him to settle near them in Bristol. There they set him up in a business of his own, which he carried on, together with a good work for the Lord.

Another day, while the frost continued, my helpers came to me, and said, "There's a woman and two children up in a garret, starving. They have had no food for days, and the neighbours say they have not seen them go up or down stairs; they must be ill."

I went to the place named, knocked at the door, and was told to "come in." On entering, I found a woman in bed, with a boy and girl on each side of her. There was nothing in this desolate chamber in the way of furniture but a broken chair, with an earthen pitcher of water on it, and the pallet bed on which they were lying. I asked if they were ill.

"No," answered the woman.

"Then why do you not get up?"

"Oh, we are keeping ourselves warm here, for we cannot do anything in this frost; so we lie in bed, and drink cold water."

"How long have you done that?"

"This is the third day."

"We are very hungry, sir," said the boy.

"Get out of bed then, and I will send you for something to eat."

With this he sprang up from under the covering in his ragged clothes, and I took out my silver pencil-case to write an order for two shillings' worth of groceries. The boy was gone in a trice, and we heard him clattering downstairs in his old shoes, which he had put on while I was writing. When he had gone, I asked the woman as to her way of livelihood. She told me, that she sang in the streets with the children, and that on the whole she made a good thing of it; "but lately," she added, "the frost has been so stinging, we cannot sing."

From the tone of her voice and manner of speaking, I suspected that she must have been an educated person. This I afterwards found to be true; for she informed me, that she "had been brought up for a drawing-room." While sitting on the one chair by her bedside, I took up a book from the mantelshelf with a name, under which was written, "From my affectionate mother."

I said, "Is this your writing?"

"Yes," she replied.

After a little more conversation, she acknowledged that she was a surgeon's daughter, and a surgeon's widow; she added, that her father had died from drink, and her husband too. After this she took to drinking, so that her mother, who had married again, would have nothing more to do with her.

Her story touched me, and I said, "Do you like this kind of begging life?"

"No, not overmuch," she answered, "but I have followed it now for several years, and it seems to agree very well with the children."

"But what a dreadful way to live, and to bring up your children! Are you disposed to try a different life?"

"Yes, if you please, sir," she said meekly.

"What can you do?"

"Do," she repeated, "why, do anything, everything. I can teach; children are obliged to obey me. Let me teach the children in the streets; there are hundreds of them running about wild; I will bring them up for you!"

By this time the boy had returned with the various articles from the shop. There were tea, sugar, bread, butter, and bacon; a little coal, sticks, and matches. He had borrowed a kettle, tea-pot, and frying-pan on his way upstairs. In a few minutes more there was a fire burning cheerfully in the little grate, and while the kettle was singing, there was the grateful sound of bacon frying, the fragrance of which spread over the room. The woman and her daughter threw off the bed covering, and were quite ready for their breakfast. Though it was late in the afternoon, it was to them a break of three days' fast,—literally a break-fast.

I rose up, saying I would leave them to their meal, and come back later on to have a little further talk. Before leaving I happened to put my hand into my pocket, when to my dismay I missed my pencil-case. The woman, seeing my look of astonishment, said gravely—

"What's the matter, sir? Have you lost anything?"

"Why, yes," I said, "my pencil-case has gone!"

"Perhaps you did not bring it, sir."

"Oh yes, I did; I wrote that order for you with it just now."

"I ain't got it," interposed the boy, who was very busy with his cooking.

"Perhaps you dropped it," said the mother, looking about the room.

At last, on moving the pillow, I saw the missing article. "Here it is," I said, "all right." I was only too delighted to have it back again, for I valued it.

"How did it ever get there, I wonder?" exclaimed the woman.

I said as little about it as possible; for I had no doubt whatever but this creature picked my pocket while I was talking to her; or perhaps when I was watching the clever operations of the boy at the fireplace. It was evident to my mind that this woman wanted changing very much.

After an hour or so I returned, and with the same pencil wrote an order for clothing to a good man, whom the Lord had sent to my help. He was a pawnbroker, and took a great interest in my work. Of his own free will he offered to let me have garments for poor people, at the price at which they had been deposited with him. He had a room full of unredeemed clothes, which were far more suitable for my protegés than new ones. Having rigged up this family, and made them look respectable for a comparative trifle, I began to think seriously of the woman's proposal to teach the children, and at last came to the conclusion that I could not do better than let her commence a school for some of the hundreds of neglected street children. I did this, hoping that no one would recognize my beggar-woman when she was dressed up as a schoolmistress. She said she did not want any salary, but only a place where she could assemble her scholars.

There is nothing like striking while the iron is hot. Thinking that there would only be a few of the quietest of the children, to begin with, I told Mrs. C. that she might have the use of the lower part of the church, till I could provide a suitable room. She agreed to this, and undertook to begin at once. Walking up and down the street, she invited the ragged and dirty children who were running about to come with her; at the same time promising to teach them.

She soon got a small crowd round her, which increased as she moved along; in less than half an hour there was a large gathering. I admitted them into the church, but instead of occupying the lower part only, they filled the whole place.

I must say that they entered in a most orderly and quiet manner, and took their seats as they were directed, or rather silently pointed to do. There they sat as mute as if they could not make a noise anywhere! Mrs. C. was like a monarch who knew her power, and exercised it with serene confidence.

In an hour's time I looked in, and there I saw my incorrigible raggamuffins in most obedient and beautiful order. They were spell-bound, and learning a verse of a hymn. The children were told that when they knew the words, they should be taught the tune; and then, that they should walk up and down the streets, and sing it. By twelve o'clock the hymn was learned, and duly rehearsed; then out came these quondam unmanageables, walking two and two, more than a hundred of them, singing, while the others followed, trying to keep step.

They were all eager to come again in the afternoon, but the schoolmistress said, "No, bring a halfpenny to-morrow morning at nine o'clock, and we will have school every day, morning and afternoon, till Saturday."

The next day, at the appointed time, the doors were besieged. There were more children than we could well accommodate; so we took in the foremost of the crowd and their halfpence, till we could take no more; and then we shut the door. Their names were written down, and they were duly installed as scholars. Thus my school was begun.

Boys and girls came the next week, with a penny each, rather than not get in; and our trouble was enhanced. While other workers had the anxiety of getting their schools up, we had the novel one of keeping it down. We wanted no salary and no books; for the children were taught orally and simultaneously. Certainly a very manifest and good effect was produced upon them.

Mrs. C. had a little assistance from her son and daughter; but otherwise the whole affair was governed by her eye, or the mesmeric or other marvellous power which she possessed, and exercised. I was happy to see these dirty ragged children being thus civilised, and brought into something like training. Mrs. C. was also listening to the gospel, and everything appeared fair and promising.

Unfortunately, this state of things did not last long; for some officious person put a letter in the newspaper, saying, "The new clergyman of Avon Street is employing a beggar-woman—a common tramp—to teach the children." This caused a dreadful upset and great consternation; but I did not care to reply to it. I thought, if children, such as they were, were taught, it would do good; that I had better take no notice and go on quietly. But the hubbub increased more and more; and the opposition was led on by people who did not know the circumstances of the case. They certainly had a good handle against me, and they plied it rigorously. I was at first disposed to resent this unwarrantable interference; but as I could not be altogether sure of my schoolmistress, and could not defend the position, I was persuaded to yield. My friend the Rector promised to look out for a more suitable mistress.

Mrs. C., seeing the trouble I was in, took a house in another part of Bath; and thus spared me the painful task of dismissing her. There no one ever suspected who or what she had been; so the school she opened rapidly increased, and was a great success. I have also every reason to believe that the gospel was blessed to her soul; and that she was changed in heart, as well as in outward life.

Several years after this, when I was preaching in London, three respectable-looking people presented themselves to me. These were none other than Mrs. C., her son, and daughter, then living in prosperity in the great metropolis as good members of society and Christian people.

My flourishing school came to an end, and the children were turned adrift, to run about the streets as heretofore. This was a great disappointment to me, but hoping for better days and a better school, I went on with my work, and thought of something else, having plenty to engage my time and attention.

CHAPTER VII.

Temperance.

1861.

NEXT to the preaching of the Gospel, and its expected results in the salvation of souls, my attention was forcibly drawn to the fact that drunkenness was the greatest hindrance to every effort put forth by the Christian worker among the people. This was a difficulty of stupendous proportions. Drink hindered people from getting good; drink hindered those who had got good; drink was the excuse for every bad thing that was done or said. I began to see that it was impossible to labour with any hope of permanent success till some plan could be devised for checking this cursed and cursing influence.

Our chief drawback, as I have stated before, arose from the scarcity of water in the street. There was literally nothing for the men, women, and children to drink but beer, and that not of the purest kind; the stuff they bought at the public-houses was more or less drugged or adulterated. Manifestly the first thing necessary was to see about obtaining a free supply of water, and to encourage the use of tea and coffee. But this implied, besides water, fire to boil it, and money to buy fuel, tea, sugar, kettle, tea-pot, tea-cups, &c. On the other hand, these migratory people could go to the public-house and obtain what they wanted without having to purchase any of these things. It was indeed a deep question, fit to tax the wisdom and ingenuity of a Home Secretary. I confess it was a task beyond me.

To add to my perplexity, I thought, Suppose tea and coffee be provided in abundance, and the people will have neither! However, it was useless to heap up difficulties; something ought to be done—must be done. We therefore provided a continual flow of water; we also employed a man to sell hot coffee up and down the street every morning and evening, and to be at the street corner the greater part of the day. Besides this, we made arrangements for this beverage to be always ready at the Penny Bank. It was obviously unreasonable to expect people to give up drinking beer, if nothing else were provided for them.

At that time I had a great prejudice against temperance pledges, and a still greater prejudice against total abstinence. I regarded it as a slur upon the Gospel, to suppose that anything else could be wanted. Besides, I thought that pledges made men rely upon their own resolutions and efforts, instead of leaning upon Christ. I also saw that in many instances reformed drunkards (particularly those who totally abstained) became self-righteous persons, whom it was hard to convict of sin. They prided themselves on being so much better and more frugal than their neighbours. Moreover, I thought it was not a right principle, to run away from an enemy, in order to overcome him! Total abstinence was often proposed to me as the one needed remedy, but I stubbornly refused to use it.

While the question was still pending, and my coffee-man was despairing of success, I was called down to Cornwall for the removal of my family to Bath. While there, I was invited to meet Mr. Samuel Bowly, the well-known venerable temperance advocate. The friend who asked me said, "We are to have a conversation after the address, and there will be no talk if you do not come!"

I went, and listened attentively to what this good man had to say. When the conversation was opened I led the opposition, contending that the Gospel was enough, and that temperance bred a spirit of self-reliance and self-righteousness. I further contended that total abstinence was nothing but a cowardly running away from the enemy instead of standing up boldly against him. My arguments were mainly listened to by willing hearers, who agreed with me, to the evident sorrow and disappointment of Mr. Bowly.

A few days afterwards, as I was returning by train through Plymouth, two drunken sailors stumbled into the carriage in which I was riding. They each had a long bottle containing spirits; and not content with what they had already taken, they went on drinking. Noticing my evident disgust at their conduct, one of them offered me his bottle, as if in bravado. I declined it. Then they began to talk so loudly, and swear so horribly, that I was obliged to reprove them for their bad language. One less drunk than the other turned to his mate, and said, "I say, Jack, I do believe this here chap is a teetotaler," pointing the neck of his bottle at me. "Is he?" said the other; "then let's throw him out of that there window." So saying they put down their bottles, and laid hands on me to put me out, while the train was in rapid motion. I resisted of course, and that with all my power. At length a gentleman who was sitting in the further corner rose up to expostulate with them, and proposed a plan which he told them was worth two of theirs, viz., to wait till we arrived at the next station, and then to throw me out. When we arrived at the next stopping-place, I need scarcely say, we ejected our troublesome companions and left them behind. After we were quiet, my deliverer asked whether it was true that I was a teetotaler. "No," I said, "I protest against it!" "That's a pity," he answered; "for if I had not been here, there is no knowing what those drunken fellows would have done to you, all upon a false ground. You would have been a martyr by mistake."

We went on talking about temperance, and I brought out my arguments, to which he replied, "Oh, that's all moonshine; you know nothing about it. It is the best thing in the world to be a teetotaller." He was very enthusiastic on the subject, and before we parted gave me one of Mr. Gough's orations. This occupied my attention all the way from Exeter, where my new friend left me, till I reached Bath. After reading it, I felt I had no arguments left. It was undeniably clear that "if a man only drinks water, he will never be drunk." Still my prejudice was by no means subdued.

The following day, when I returned to my work there were complaints as usual. So many had been drunk; such an one had been beating his wife; so-and-so had gone back. The last mentioned was a man who had given great promise, and I could not help going in search of him immediately. He was very penitent, and sorry for his fall, and said with tears in his eyes, "I could not help myself."

In the hope of removing his difficulty, and to encourage him, I said, "Come now, Charlie, I will sign the pledge if you will!"

"That I will," he exclaimed, "with both hands! And I'll bring a lot of fellows along with me."

This being agreed upon, I walked up and down the street, announcing that I would have a temperance meeting in the evening. Then I possessed myself of a pledge book and cards.

In the evening, when we were assembled, I explained to the people the special purpose of our gathering. I told them of my prejudice against temperance work, of my opposition to it at the meeting in Penzance, and also about the drunken sailors in the train, who wanted to punish me for being a teetotaler. This last statement seemed to amuse the company very much. I then read extracts from Mr. Gough's oration, and concluded by saying, "Here is the new pledge book! I will sign first; Charlie is going to sign next (with both hands, he says): who will follow?" We had a large number of signatures that evening, and day by day they were added to. Very soon we had a temperance band of two hundred members.

I gave the people to understand, however, that *temperance was not religion.* I merely wanted to remove the hindrance in the way of so many men and women, so that with clear heads they might hear and receive the Gospel; and that converted men might not be overpowered by strong drink. "Suppose," I said, "one of you came to hear a sermon, and had a bad habit of knocking your head against the wainscot, making a noise, disturbing other people, and hurting yourself; I would certainly move you away from it. So I want to move you away from this terrible habit of drinking."

My Temperance Society greatly prospered, and proved to be an immense help to the Gospel preaching. We had also a Band of Hope, for even children were frequently seen reeling about the streets in a drunken state, the cause of sport and merriment to their elders. It was high time that some effort should be made to overcome this evil.

I must not forget to say that with all the encouragement I had much opposition on this subject in my district, and a greater battle to fight outside of it. In those days it was a severe trial to be steadfast, for I did not know so much about the temperance cause as I do now; nor was there such a cloud of witnesses for it as at the present time. The plea of injury to health was strongly urged upon me; it was said that the atmosphere in which I worked necessitated the use of alcoholic stimulants. I was not then quite sure of the falsity of this plea, but I had pledged myself, so I held to my pledge, and abstained in spite of doctors,* feelings, failings, and everything else. Some one recommended me to drink the iron water of Bath, and to bathe in it every morning. This I found to be very good advice, which I followed cheerfully and with great benefit.

The fact that not less than sixty thousand people annually go to a drunkard's grave, and a drunkard's hell, from this Christian land of Great Britain, and that a hundred and fifty millions sterling are wasted on drink and tobacco every year, is surely enough to induce all philanthropic persons to discourage the use of alcoholic drinks. Besides, it is our privilege as Christians to deny ourselves for the good of others.

Among my poor degraded people I had some of all kinds, and of every denomination, who were more or less steeped in this fatal vice of drunkenness—Roman Catholics, Gipsies, Dissenters, and Church people, to say nothing of the members who were regardless of creeds and names. In our temperance meetings, however, I classed them all under one category—that of drunkards. When I preached the Gospel I addressed them still as of one kind, namely, children of Adam, "dead in trespasses and sins." My course was definite and plain enough, to ignore all differences, and press the points, "You must abstain from intoxicating drinks to be free!" "You must be born again to be saved."

At our temperance meetings, during the free conversation after the address, I had opportunities of bringing out the truth as it is in Jesus. In addition to this, I told various narratives of conversion, by way of illustration, which were backed up by the testimony of persons in the room. This arrested attention, and promoted inquiry, which led to the conversion of many of these poor benighted people.

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* I regret to say, that after I left Bath, I was persuaded by the faculty to use stimulants for my throat; later experience, however, has taught me beyond all doubt that this was a great mistake. I am in every respect far better and stronger for being an abstainer.

I have only space here to speak particularly of two classes of persons who frequented these meetings, Roman Catholics and Gipsies. The former were amongst the most degraded of the people, ragged and dirty in their persons, and worse still in what they called their "homes." They were unthrifty, and indifferent both to their own welfare and that of their belongings. Notwithstanding this, numbers of these people rose early on Sunday mornings to go to Mass, where their demeanour was most devout and orderly. They returned home to their usual careless ways, spending the remainder of the day in frivolity and drunkenness.

One would have thought, from their general appearance and manners, that they were as ignorant as they were degraded; but on talking with them I was quite astonished to find the distinctiveness of their religious tenets. These were salvation by the Church—forgiveness through the priest—and protection by the blessed Virgin. From all accounts, however, the first was a very shadowy thing in itself, though many professed to be so certain about it. There was no salvation in this world, it was reserved for the next. Then it could only be procured by masses said before and after their death in order to deliver them from purgatory. The idea of being saved, with everlasting life now, was something quite new to them. As to forgiveness of sins through absolution by the priest, that was as uncertain as their salvation. There was no real pardon in it, they knew that; some of them did not care to be examined as to the benefit they received from the absolution of their "father confessor." The protection of the Virgin, however, was a point they were very tenacious about. It was easy to see that Christ was nowhere, and that the Virgin Mother held the first place in their minds.

I lost no opportunity of showing the Romanist the uncertainty of his foundation, and pointed out how delusive was the expectation based upon it. At the same time I could not help seeing the advantage of having a distinctive teaching. Those who are influenced by it lean on something positive. If it is right, it will support the soul; if it is not so, it can more easily be knocked away than the shadowy negations on which some people try to rest.

I pointed out to one who was trusting in his Church for salvation, that the Church of Christ was not intended to take the place of the Saviour, but rather to be a shelter for the saved. I took some pains to explain the difference between the *shepherd* who found the sheep, and the *fold* in which *he* kept it. This man saw his mistake, and all the more clearly when I told him, from my own experience, that I myself was once under that delusion, and thought I was safe because the Church was so—but the Shepherd had not found me then!

This man gave up the shadow for the substance, and surrendered himself as a sinner to be saved; and thank God, he was saved.

I asked another man, "What was finished on the cross?" Not receiving any answer, I went on to say, "Your salvation was finished there. That being so, there is no need for you to be *doing* in order to *obtain* salvation. The religion of four letters is better than that of two; that is to say, the religion which rests on what Christ has *done* is better than that which depends on what you can *do*." This man also was persuaded to give up his error, and in the light of truth to seek for pardon and peace from Jesus Himself. I found the Roman Catholic women more tenacious and stubborn than the men; yet some of these had their eyes opened to see themselves as lost sinners, instead of being, as they thought, the "true Church."

The gipsies presented a great contrast to the Romanists. Instead of having distinctive tenets and strong prejudices, their minds were more like blank sheets of paper. Their inquiries and questions at the meetings were simple and child-like, yet all the more interesting on that account.

One man among them had a dream about heaven, which made a deep impression upon his mind. He became very desirous to know about this place, and how to get there. I told him that Christ by His death had opened the way, and that He was the door by which all must enter. This young man was brought to God, and one by one many others followed into the same happy experience.

These poor gipsy people believed, and were saved. They came with simple faith, and had personal, direct intercourse with Jesus as their Saviour. The sinner's salvation, or the justification of the ungodly, is by faith only.

The doctrine of justification by faith only, is the counterpart of the atonement. They must stand or fall together. Deny the former, and the death of Christ remains as one ground of salvation among others, but not the *sole ground.* Deny the latter, and the Crucified One may be to you a hero, a philanthropist, or an example; but not a Saviour—and the only Saviour, Jesus.

Thus drunkenness, which was originally the great hindrance to the work, indirectly proved to be an opportunity for helping it. Many men, women, and children, whom I could not otherwise have reached, were reformed, and eventually converted, by attending these temperance meetings. Some of them came out as zealous advocates of the truth, and with loving hearts testified all over the city as they sold their wares. The gipsies particularly recommended and made known the work in Avon Street.

A gentleman from a distance, who had an interesting conversation with one of these gipsy men, came down to the little church, and there found peace to his soul. He afterwards developed into an aggressive Christian, full of good works.

Here I discovered another thing worth recording; that the lower orders can do very well for themselves when they are changed in heart. Providing for their wants, thinking for them, and relieving them indiscriminately, hinders rather than helps them. Thus the good old Book proves itself true again and again, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

CHAPTER VIII.

Net-Making.

1861.

THE work in Avon Street was now engaging my whole attention, and as it increased, it brought me into communication with a larger circle of people. The Gospel and Temperance meetings began to be much talked about, and were frequently made the subject of merriment. This only had the effect of attracting more notice to them, and often of inducing anxious souls to come in order to see and hear for themselves. The Bible-readings also, which I held in other parts of the city, met with a large measure of success, and aroused not only deep interest, but also a spirit of earnest inquiry.

It must not be supposed, however, that all the work was successful; nor was it by any means so hearty and interesting as that which I had been accustomed to, for ten years past. The church and congregation were comparatively small; the people ignorant and perverse; and in the majority of cases the results very doubtful. Sometimes I was tempted to think that the Lord had given me up altogether; for so cleverly did Satan inject thoughts into my mind, that I felt as if they were my own, and as if his lies were truth. I often longed to go forth again and preach elsewhere, that I might satisfy myself whether the sword of the Word was really less quick and powerful than it used to be.

I was very glad, therefore, when a clergyman called and invited me to hold special services in his parish in Wiltshire. He reminded me that he had once asked me in Cornwall to lend him my pulpit on a certain Sunday to plead for the Jews' Society. I remembered the circumstance, and also telling him that I could not possibly give up my pulpit on that day. I also remembered that he came to the services, and had a good opportunity of witnessing a real Cornish revival; for at that time the people were all alive, and their souls overflowing with gladness. I readily accepted his invitation, and promised to give him a week. He was much pleased at the prospect, and expressed a hope that his people might be roused up in the way that mine had been in Cornwall. He then returned to his parish in order to make the needful preparations, and I began to think how I was to provide during my absence for my numerous meetings.

Among those whose help I solicited on this occasion, was a clergyman, whom I had frequently observed in my congregation. He told me he was staying at Bath for a holiday; but that he would most gladly take the services at my little church on Sunday, adding, "I only wish it was to give you rest."

He was a kind, good, evangelical man, somewhat of the old style, but better than most of them. He had no partiality for attitudes; and was quite safe from latitudes; but I feared not so free from platitudes as I could have wished. He was, however, a converted man, and told me that he took much interest in the work in Avon Street.

"You appear to me," he said, "to go about your work in a business-like way, just as if you fully expected God would work with you."

"Yes," I replied, "I do work in this way; and yet it is not I, nor is the work mine. It is the Lord's work, and I desire to be only His instrument in it."

"But what do you say about God's sovereignty, my friend?"

"The sovereign Lord is far more willing that souls should be saved than I am; and when I have a desire for their salvation, I am certain that His desire is far greater."

"Well," he said, "truly it looks like it; and I have marvelled to see your success. I assure you this is quite a new thing to me; I have been preaching the Gospel for twenty years, and, excepting in a few casual instances, I have not been permitted to see any results. Certainly I never went to work with expectation as you do. Here you are going out on a mission; and I suppose you fully anticipate that God's blessing will accompany your efforts as heretofore: and I dare say you will come back and tell us what the Lord has wrought by you."

"Yes," I said, "I do indeed expect blessing, for I am going at my Master's bidding to launch out into the deep, and to let down the nets for a draught. I do not profess to be a great preacher; nor do I believe that God's blessing in any way depends upon His servants possessing such a qualification."

"Neither do I," he replied; "but we must preach the Gospel, and I flatter myself that I do this; and I am as bold for the doctrines of the Reformation as you are."

"I do not doubt that for a moment," I rejoined. "I wish on my return you would let me see one of your sermons." I asked him to do this, for I suspected that he did not preach "with authority," but "as the Scribes;" that is, only in the way of exposition and teaching.

On the Saturday evening I went into Wiltshire; and there I observed that the Rector was very much of the same school as the friend who had undertaken my duty. It perplexed me greatly, to find that so many persons who professed to be converted to God, and who had so much knowledge of the Scriptures, should yet be without spiritual results in their ministry.

This clergyman had been educated for the medical profession; but in his zeal for God, at his conversion, and in the freshness of his first love, he had sacrificed his worldly prospects and given himself up to the ministry. Whether it ever really satisfied his soul to become a clergyman, to minister in the church, and preach sermons, I do not know; but for years he had done this, yet without seeing conversions, or even expecting any. He said, he "hoped that some day the Lord would give him souls, but that of course was dependent upon God's sovereignty, not on himself."

The appointed hour having arrived we went to the schoolroom. There we had a good hearty prayer-meeting, and separated with a full expectation of God's blessing on the coming day. The following morning, Sunday, the church was well filled, and the promised presence of the Lord was indeed there in manifest power. I spoke from the text, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death" (Rev. i. 18).

In the afternoon the people came again; and in the evening the church was thronged in every available corner, Some were sitting on the window-sills; others on the pulpit stairs; and two men had even taken possession of the pulpit itself, which they continued to occupy till it was time for me to go in. One of them then came down, leaving the other in sole possession, who, pointing to his ear, as I ascended the pulpit steps, apparently wished to signify that he was deaf, and would be glad on that account to retain his position beside me. During my sermon he became rather distracting in his demonstrations, for, as he afterwards said, "he got so happy, he couldn't help it." There were many others in the congregation who were also rejoicing; while some, on the contrary, were crying.

When the sermon was over, I gave out a hymn, which was sung with great earnestness. As we approached the last verse the Rector reached up to me from the desk and said, "What are you going to do next?" "Ask you to pray," I replied, and while he looked imploringly at me not to do so, the hymn was over, and I said, "The Rector will pray. Let us pray."

He immediately went down from the desk into the aisle, robed as he was in his surplice, and there he fell on his knees and begged the Lord aloud to "have mercy on him, and heal his backslidings." The people were melted to tears, and the church resounded with their cries for mercy. I felt that it was now time to come out of the pulpit, so I left my deaf friend in full possession, where he remained crying and rejoicing by turns. I had much difficulty in getting about, for the people were on their knees in all directions. It was a scene worthy of Cornwall.

The Rector soon obtained peace and joy in believing, and then went about with me to cheer the desponding ones by pointing them to Christ, and to rejoice with those who were happy. It was a most blessed day, and the beginning of a good work in this place and neighbourhood. I was delighted beyond all bounds, and the more so from having been pent up so long, struggling and contending with many questions. I had been sorely beaten down with discouragements in Avon Street; but now I stood upright again, and felt as if I could never doubt any more.

The next day, though the church was not so crowded as on the Sunday, it was full, and we had much blessing.

On the Friday evening we had a meeting for thanksgiving and testimony in the school-room. There, a good number joined heartily in the "General Thanksgiving;" and one by one, as they could muster courage, individuals stood up and bore testimony, thanking God for the blessing they had received during the week. I need scarcely say that the Rector took a prominent part in this happy service, and declared that he now purposed working in earnest. From this time he did so in his own parish, and in the neighbourhood round.

All this showed and proved beyond doubt, that when the right means are used, God is willing and ready to give His blessing. I came back more and more confirmed in the assurance that God's Word is not bound; and that it is "sharper than any two-edged sword."

On Saturday I returned home full of faith, and strong in the Lord, determined to work with more energy than ever. I seemed to have brought the fire with me, for my own people were kindled on the following Sunday, and several were converted.

On Monday the friend who had taken my duty called to ask about the mission. He had already seen a short notice in the newspapers, but he wished to learn fuller particulars from myself. When I gave him a description of some of the scenes and events that had taken place, he exclaimed, "Well, I must say, I have read of such things, but have never seen anything of the kind." I could not help saying, "How is it possible for it to be otherwise in the case of people who work in a groove of their own, and who make a point of carefully avoiding such things?" I wished him to understand that the want of success in the ministry is not the fault of the Word of God, or the God of the Word; but that of the man who professes to preach it. Men are saved to save others; and we, who by our ordination are set apart for God's work, ought the more specially to lay ourselves out for the salvation of souls. This work is very near the heart of God. And it is one of the highest privileges of our life to be ambassadors for Christ; to plead with men, as though God did beseech them by us to be reconciled to Himself. How, under such conditions, can it be in vain?

"What would I not give," said my friend, "to work like that!"

"Give nothing," I replied. "The work is as much for you as for any one else, if you will. But in order to accomplish it, it is necessary that you should be a *witness*, as well as a *minister* of the truth you preach. I mean you should be able to say, not only that Christ died, but '*He died for me*:' not only to preach salvation, but to add, '*I am saved.*' We should never be afraid, or ashamed to make this declaration, and thus bear testimony to the fact of our salvation. We need not be modest about it, as though we had anything to do with it, beyond giving ourselves up as sinners to be saved.

My friend showed me, as he had promised, the notes of one of his sermons. It was on the "Forgiving love of God," from the text, "He frankly forgave them all." After an introduction he divided his subject into five points. 1. God's character. 2. God is Love. 3. His is a forgiving Love. 4. He loves to exercise His forgiving love. 5. Conclusion. No doubt the sermon was interesting and also instructive, but I could not help observing a great deficiency in it, and said, "There is no net in this."

"My dear friend, what can you mean?" he said, leaning forward to look over his manuscript.

"There is all the difference," I replied, "between a shepherd and a fisherman; the former leads out, the latter encloses. You will certainly never catch souls by that kind of sermon. You might as well throw a boat-load of twine into the sea, and expect to entangle and catch fish, as to arrest and convert souls by such statements. Twine must be woven into a net before fish can be caught."

"What ever do you mean?" he said, with a perplexed look. "You seem to be happy in your own thoughts; but I am quite in the dark: I do not understand you in the least."

"I mean that your sermon ought to be arranged for the purpose of bringing conviction upon your hearers. I have not the least doubt but your people hear that kind of sermon with admiration, and that they will come again and again to hear you preach, and still remain in the world. They may call you a dear, good man, and perhaps give you a silver teapot or salver with a glowing inscription."

Interrupting me with a quiet voice, he said, "They have done all that."

"And I suppose remain unconverted still?"

"Yes, that is exactly the case."

"If you look at the chapter from which your text is taken," I rejoined, "I think you will see how the great Preacher Himself handles your subject. He takes a parable of two debtors, the one owing a large sum, and the other a small one; but in one respect they were both alike, for they had nothing to pay. Therefore they cast themselves at their creditor's feet, and besought his mercy. Then, he frankly forgave them all their debt."

"Yes," he said, "that is true; I have it here, in the conclusion."

"Well then, I think that you had better re-arrange your sermon according to the context, and aim at bringing conviction upon your hearers."

He saw what I meant, and brightened up, as if a new thought had struck him. In the afternoon he came again with his sermon headings; and after looking over them, I asked him to preach that particular sermon in my church on the next Wednesday evening. He did this, and a very excellent appeal it was., At the close three men came into the vestry to ask that all-important question, "What must I do to be saved?" My friend burst into tears and remained silent while I dealt with these anxious ones.

He was now all impatience to return to his parish, and spent the remainder of his holiday in rearranging several of his old sermons (net-making, as he called it), till the following Saturday, when he went back.

On the Monday morning I received a telegram from him as follows: "Come in haste. They are crying all round the house. I don't know what to do. Telegraph if you can come." I did so, and followed my message as quickly as I could, having to go to London first, and then to the South Coast.

When I arrived, the people had already assembled in the schoolroom, and they were singing with loud voices,

"Joyfully, joyfully, onward we move,"

and appeared to be very happy. After listening to one or two verses, I stopped them and asked the question, "Which way are you going so joyfully? I am rejoiced to find you all so happy, for I had come expecting to see a number of you in distress of soul." I then asked them to sit down, and went on to speak of the two roads, namely, the broad one which leads to destruction, and the narrow one which leads to life everlasting. I pointed out to them what a dreadful thing it was to be singing and rejoicing while they were still in the former, and showed them that we must come out of the broad road altogether, to be in the narrow way, or to have any right to join in singing such words as those to which I had been listening.

Soon their countenances changed, and I went on to say, that I remembered the time when I sang thus blindly myself, and was very happy in the broad way. I had been going down-hill with the world, when my eyes were opened to see that this would take me to hell: so I stopped; and not knowing any better, I thought, if down-hill leads to hell, then up-hill will surely lead to heaven; and that is the way for me.

I at once gave up the world, and became religious; and though still unconverted, went on my way singing joyfully; but not without many disappointments. Some years after I was again arrested in my course, and the Lord showed me that the broad road, whether one goes up or down it, leads only to destruction. John Bunyan says there is a way to hell from the very gate of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction. And it is true. There is only one way to heaven out of this place of danger, namely, by the Strait Gate. Christ Himself is that Gate, and He stands there in Person to receive all who will come to Him. He says, "I am the Door; by Me if any man will enter in, he shall be saved" (John x. 9). I then went on to beg of them to deceive themselves no longer; entreating them, if they knew they were still unsaved, to yield themselves at once to the loving invitations of the Saviour, and to accept His offered salvation.

The place of singing now became one of weeping and praying; and then after a time it was turned into one of rejoicing and praising God. Day after day all through the week souls were released from captivity, and brought into the liberty of God's dear children.

One man, who had been awakened if not converted during the week, heard early on Sunday morning that there was a quantity of sea-weed on the beach. He immediately went off, and loaded his cart, when, just as he had finished, a coast-guard man who happened to be standing by, said, "I wouldn't take that there on a Sunday, for anything!" The other making no reply, he continued: "No, that I wouldn't; not for ten times its value."

"Yer mind yer own business: that's enough for you."

"Well, that is just the thing I am a-doing; I say I wouldn't take that there on a Sunday, not I."

"I will then," he said, leading on his horse impetuously.

He had not gone far when his conscience smote him, and he stopped and tilted all the seaweed out again on the beach. As he was proceeding homewards with his empty cart, he met several other men on their way to the shore.

"Well, neighbour," said one, "ain't there no sea-weed to day?"

"Oh yes, plenty on it."

"Why, then, are yer coming back empty?"

"'Cos it's Sunday."

"Come on now! Yer may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb. If it's wrong to come out on a Sunday, yer in for that; and yer may as well have summat for it. Come on back!"

"No," he said, "not I."

He went forward, and had to bear the same testimony seven or eight times before he reached home; and there his wife scolded him for being "such a fool."

"Fool or none," he said, "I could not bring any. I loaded the cart too!"

"Why, thou art a bigger fool than I thought for: I've a great mind to go after it myself."

He was in his usual place at church during the day, and at the evening meeting in the schoolroom. There he found peace, and told us all about the conflict he had had in the morning. This was a very good beginning for a young convert.

Many of the congregation who had contributed their "mites" towards the silver teapot for the Rector were greatly offended, and protested strongly against "this kind of preaching;" but, notwithstanding all opposition, the work continued to prosper, and went on for several years after, till the Rector left the place.

The greatest change of all was in the Rector himself. Since he had learned the secret of "making nets," he became quite a different man, and carried the glorious news of salvation wherever he went. He worked all the harder, when he remembered the "strong delusion," as he called it, under which he had laboured for twenty years.

CHAPTER IX.

The Dancing-Room.

1861.

THE room in which we held our temperance meetings had previously been a dancing-room, and used to be a most iniquitous place; but it had now became one in which much good was done. It was a place of real joy to many who had formerly met here under very different circumstances, the slaves of sin and Satan. Evidently this room had been in use for some adult school or evening class before my time, for there were some desks and benches there; and on the mantel-piece was this sentence, "Wickedness burneth like a fire." There was not much Gospel about this declaration, to be sure; but no doubt it was intended to enlighten, or in some way benefit the people.

As our meetings increased, this room became too strait; but I found that, by making a few alterations, we could easily provide from twenty-five to thirty extra sittings. For this purpose I turned to a sturdy beggar, who had attracted my attention more than once, and invited him to come to my help. I selected this man because I was told that he used to be a first-rate carpenter; but that now he had altogether gone to the bad, and had given up working. How he lived no one knew. He told me that he could always get money when he liked, and that he spent it as he liked. He evidently thought himself far too clever to be a persevering artizan. He said, "They're a very slow lot, these steady-going hypocrites. They're every bit as bad as I am; but they're ashamed to own it."

"Then you are not, I suppose?"

"Well," he said, "I don't know that: I'm a bad lot and no mistake; but it's no use a pretending to be good and all that, when I'm not."

"I should so like," I said, "to take you in hand and make something of you. Will you be honourable now, and let me try?"

He hesitated a little. "Now come," I continued; "you cannot be worse off than you are. It will not do you any harm, and may do you a great deal of good."

"Well, no," he said, "I s'pose not. But how are you going to do me good? I should like to know."

"I will try and make a man of you. I will give you some work to begin with: then, if you do it well, I may go on to do other things."

"Take away the beer, I guess; I know what ye're after well enough," he said, laughing; "ye're crafty."

"No, I will not take away your beer without your consent, or even without your request. You come and do a job of work for me."

He came to the room, and took my orders. I wanted some new benches made, and a few alterations attended to. He went about this in a workman-like manner, and showed that he understood what he was doing. While measuring, he looked round the room, and said, "I've had some fine rigs in this ere place, I can tell yer."

"Of what kind?" I inquired.

"Bless your innocence! don't ask questions; it would make you blush. We have had all kinds of wickedness. I wouldn't swear but what murder has been committed here too. I should be ashamed to tell a gentleman, the like of you. However, it's over now. This place was a devil's hole, and no mistake."

I noticed him glancing now and then at the fire-place, and thought that perhaps he wanted an order to paint it afresh. "Can you paint?" I said.

"Oh yes, I can do anything; but we will get this ere carpentering done first."

"Very well; go on: the faster the better."

"I was thinking," he said, "there ain't much use in them there words," pointing to the text on the mantel-piece. "We all know that sin burns fast enough—ah! don't it burn night and day? and in the day as bad as the night."

"Do you like all this sinning?" I asked.

"Why, you see, some on us have got into it, and can't get out so easy; so I says, let's make the best on it. We must go to hell anyhow sooner or later."

There was a tone of despair about this man, and a recklessness, as if he did not care what became of him either here or hereafter—as if he dared not think about it.

He took his measurements, and was going away, when I said to him, "Have you any tools?"

"Oh yes, lots o' tools—at my 'uncle's,' yer know; he's the fellow to take care of our things; and what's more, he gives yer ten shillings or so, to enjoy yerself, don't yer see? This 'ere job of yours will come to a pound or more, so I'll get them out, and perhaps I shall never get them in again —that is, if you makes a respectable man of me, yer know."

"Mind, then, that you do your work well, and keep from the drink." He seemed melted, I thought, by my kindness.

As soon as he had gone I brought in a man to paint out the text which had "no news in it," and in due time gave him the following words to put in its place: "Return unto Me; I have redeemed thee: Thou art Mine."

Some days afterwards the carpenter came again to put up his work, and told me that he had drunk nothing "for these four days."

"That is right," I said; "I hope you will keep to it like a man."

"Ah yes; but I must have a treat, you know, when I gets my money."

I saw him looking at my new sentence every now and then, and observed him smiling to himself as he went on with his work. At last he said, "Well, that there is too much of a text; that's no more good to a fellow like me than the t'other!"

"Oh, I beg your pardon; for I was thinking of you when I chose it—it is the very one for you, and no mistake."

"I can't see that anyhow."

"Look here," I replied; "do you believe that God created the world?"

"Yes, certainly I do."

"And you believe that He made it better than it is now?"

"Well," he said thoughtfully, "yes; I 'spose it was better—it's a getting bad, like me."

"But bad as it is, it has been redeemed. Do you know anything about that?"

"You are innicent, you are, and no mistake," he said, laughing. "*Redeemed*, I should say I knows something about redeeming things; why, the t'other day didn't I get my tools out?"

"You are a sharp fellow," I said: "that is quite right. When I buy things I give my money for other people's goods; but when I redeem them, I give it for that which is my own."

"Well now, I understand that," he replied.

"God made you and me," I continued, "for Himself. And because Satan stole us away from Him, God has redeemed us by giving His Son to die; and so has bought us back, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of His own Son. You see, God has redeemed us, as surely as He has created us; and we are the characters to whom He says, 'Return unto Me; I have redeemed thee: thou art Mine.'"

"That is almost too much."

"Why, just now you said it *was* too much: now you say, *almost*. You may be sure it is not too much for God to do, when He has given His Son to die for you! It is a shame to overlook such love as this."

He turned round and went on hammering away at his work in silence; so I sat down for ten minutes in silence too, inwardly praying for him.

Then I said, "Are you going to give up now, and let God save you? Remember, He *has redeemed* you."

"Do you think He will?"

"Yes, I am sure of it."

"I'm a proper bad un, you know; out and out bad!"

"Well, that is the more reason for His saving you. The Lord Jesus did not come to save good people, but bad ones; not the righteous, but sinners."

He replied, "You take me back to old days, you do, when I was a boy in the Sunday-school: I was a good steady boy then, and my old mother gave me her blessing. Ah, it would break her dear heart to see me now."

Here his voice began to fail, and his eyes were moistened with tears.

"Come," I said, "let us kneel down in this very place;" and suiting the action to the words, I began to pray for him. He also knelt, and prayed for himself with much emotion.

"What are you praying for?" I asked. "The Lord is inviting you to come to Him. Will you do so?"

"Yes, I'll give up."

He could say no more, being completely overcome by his feelings. Presently he rose and went on to finish his work, knowing that I wanted it done, as we were to have a meeting there in the evening. As soon as he had set up the benches he rose to go away, and thanking me said, "I will come up again to-night."

I said, "Do you mean that you will come to the meeting?"

"Yes, I do."

He kept his word, and was a most attentive hearer. At the after-meeting he gave his heart to God, and was set at liberty, to the great joy of his soul. Before leaving, he came forward of his own accord and signed the pledge.

This man afterwards became a most earnest and useful helper in the work, and always brought some others with him to the meetings. He made it his business to invite his mates, telling them how much good he himself had received.

Many other individual cases we had from time to time of which there is not room to tell; but, one or two striking ones in connection with this room I feel I ought to relate.

There was a poor boy who came to these Temperance Meetings, and who used to curl himself up like a dog on the floor. In this attitude he might have been seen lying at a certain corner of the street in all weathers, day after day, for seven or eight years. How he ever heard or understood anything about these meetings I do not know; but he came regularly every week. I generally illustrated my lecture with some stories about people in other parishes where I had been. On one occasion when "Sam" was there (for such was his name), I told them about a man in Cornwall who sent for me when he was dying. He told me, that when he was a young man he went down one day into an "old back to hunt" (that is, into a deserted mine where he used to work), to see if he could discover the presence of mineral, which is indicated by green or brown waterstains or marks on the rock. He went down with a lighted candle and a tinder-box, and knowing the place very well, he thought he could easily find his way about as in former times. But the levels were in a very rough state, and the shafts crumbling in many places, so that it was dangerous to go about, even with a candle. In some parts he had to crawl on hands and knees, and in others to go very carefully round the edge of the shaft.

As he proceeded he heard a sound, and wondered what it was. He hallooed out, thinking that perhaps some other persons were down on the same errand; but getting no answer, he continued on his way till he came to a shaft where there used to be a plank. It was there still, but it did not look safe, so he would not venture on it, but turned down another and more difficult path. He had not gone far when a drop of water fell on his candle, and nearly put it out. "That will never do: don't yer go to go out," he said to his candle, but had scarcely uttered the words when another drop came, and out it went, leaving him in total darkness. He put his hand into his pocket for his tinder-box, when to his dismay he found it was not there; it had dropped out of his pocket—that was the sound he had heard in the solemn stillness of that lonely place. It was quite impossible for him to find his way back to the spot where he had lost the box. What was he to do now? He could strike fire, but was not able to retain the spark long enough to relight his candle.

At last he sat down in despair and had a good cry, wondering what would become of him, for he could see nothing but the prospect of death. Then he got up to try and feel his way back, but soon found that he had quite lost himself, and did not know where he was, or which way to turn. Besides, he heard a sound of rushing water, and felt with his hands that he was on the brink of a shaft. The gloom was terrible and his heart sank within him. In his misery he began to pray, and begged the Lord to let him out—he did so want to go back home again. He promised that he would give his heart to the Lord, if He granted this desire.

While he was yet praying aloud, he heard something which at first he thought was the echo of his own prayer; but as the sounds increased he perceived that they were the voices of other people. Presently a candle appeared; and what should he see, but his own brother's face beside it! and soon he heard the well-known voice calling for him. He and two friends had come to search for the lost or missing one, and rejoiced greatly at their success in finding him. All the party returned "to grass," but he added solemnly, "I never gave my heart to God. Now He won't take it—no, He won't—it's no use my giving it—it's all over with me. Prayer is just like turning a key round and round in the lock; but it won't open the door." I urged the poor man not to lose any more time; but he only smiled with despair, and said, "No, it's no use; He'll never hear me more: my day of grace is done, the door is shut," and thus this unhappy man died.

The lesson I drew from this sad story was—Do not promise to give your heart to God unless you wish Him to take it; and if you do promise, keep your word, for "God is not mocked."

The next morning Sam's mother called on me, and said, "My poor boy Sam has been praying all night; he began as soon as he came home from the meeting." As far as she could make out, it was all about a man in a mine. It was the first time she had heard him pray for the last seven or eight years. I told her what I had spoken about the previous evening, and added, that I had no idea he ever heard, much more understood, anything that was said.

"Oh yes," she replied, "he knows everything, though he does not speak; and that story you told touched him. He's like come to his senses this morning; but he's very unhappy."

She then told me that he used to be a good boy for school, and was getting on very well, and that he was a good scholar. One night she heard him groaning and sighing as if in trouble; so she asked him what was the matter. He said he had a bad toothache—poor boy, he howled every now and then in his pain, but would not take anything for his relief. After an hour or two she heard him praying; he said, "O Lord, if Thou wilt take this pain away I will give my heart to Thee." She wondered where he had ever heard of such a thing as giving his heart to God; for in those days she knew nothing about it herself. Evidently God heard and answered his prayer, for the pain went away, and he was fast asleep when she rose in the morning.

After breakfast, as he was hurrying off to school she asked him how his toothache was. "Oh, it's all gone," he said impatiently, "it's all gone: it wasn't much."

She did not like this, and noticed that when he returned to dinner he resented her making any allusion to the previous night. In the evening she thought it her duty to remind him of his promise to give his heart to God. Upon this he flew into a violent rage, and told her "that was no business of hers." She was frightened at his temper and violent conduct; and from that day it seemed as if the poor boy had been possessed with some evil spirit. He became altogether unmanageable, and began to curse and swear; neglected his school; and behaved very badly. Ever since that time his mind had gone, and he had been more like a beast than a boy. "Last night," continued the mother, "he was crying and praying again, and begged God to forgive him, and take his heart now."

I said, "There is to be a special meeting to-night at the same place; make him understand that, and let him come." She thought she had heard him say that he was going again.

He came and curled himself up as usual on one side of the fire-place, and remained there motionless, as if he heeded nothing. I took occasion to put in words of comfort and encouragement for one in his case; that is, for one who had made a vow, and having broken it, was sorry. From that day his mind gradually returned, and he who had been "daft," and scarcely human in his ways and habits, became rational and intelligent. In a little while he was converted, and rejoiced greatly. After this he never neglected the meetings; they were his joy and delight every evening. Whether at the preaching, the Bible-class, or the church service, he was always present. He recovered so far that he was able to go to work and earn his living; and before I left Bath he had taken to himself a wife, and was becoming a prosperous man. Such is the power of the Gospel! Even in my experience I have known seven cases of restoration from imbecility.* The Word of God has penetrated where nothing else could reach.

I will tell of one more case, and then conclude. It is that of a young lady who professed to be a Christian, but was not altogether satisfied in her mind. One evening I happened to speak about trusting God, and said, that it was impossible to do so, if we did not know something of Him as a person. Our Heavenly Father knows us, and knows what things we need better than we do. The Lord said, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin" (Matt. vi. 28). And He uses this figure to teach the lesson of trust. The lilies of the field were what we call self-sown, and had no one to look after them; yet God made them as perfect as the lilies in a garden.

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* Two of these cases were lads whose minds to all appearance were hopelessly vacant. They were not held responsible, and ought not to have been trusted to go out alone. Both of them, strange to say, though at different places, were attracted to the church by the organ. Their delight, in each instance, was to put their ear close to the side of the instrument. They seemed to derive pleasure from the vibration of sound, which some notes produced more than others. One of these poor boys surprised his mother one day by telling her that he was "going to heaven soon, and that his sins were pardoned." True to his prediction, he shortly afterwards died. He sent for me first, and told me, with a clear and intelligent countenance, that he was happy; that he believed in Christ, and was going home to heaven. He astonished me also by repeating many things he had heard in my sermons.

The other boy's conversion was discovered in a strange way. He had an uncle living about three miles off, who was confined to his bed. This man sent for me one day, and told me of the effect of my preaching upon him; but he added, "You will never guess who brought the good news of salvation to my soul. It was poor 'Poo,' as we call him, and as he calls himself." I must say that this news did surprise me. I took an early opportunity of talking with the lad, and found that he was really converted. From that time we observed how his mind began to expand; and from being a burden and anxiety to his family, he became a happy and useful member of it.

In order to grow they need three things, the rain, the sunshine, and the air; and so do we. We need the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; the love of God the Father; and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. These are to us what the rain, sunshine, and air, are to the lilies; take away any one of these, and the plant could not flourish. For instance, without rain it could not grow; without sunshine it would be colourless; and without air it would wither. In like manner, without the grace of the Lord Jesus we can do nothing; without the sunshine of the Father's love our life is aimless; and without the fellowship of the Spirit there is no real usefulness. But I added, it is absolutely necessary that the lily be *rooted;* otherwise, the rain, sunshine, and air will only rot it and dry it up for the burning.

This address was the means of arousing this lady to a sense of her need; and then she was led into perfect joy and rest in a personal Saviour. With her whole soul she henceforth devoted herself to work in that wretched and degraded place—to "rescue the perishing, and care for the dying."

CHAPTER X.

Freshford.

1861.

FOR those whom it suits, the climate of Bath is excellent; but it is too warm for some people and positively injurious to others. Upon the high hills around the city the air is bracing enough, but it is not so in the centre. It is true that the far-famed springs * counteract the depressing influence; but however pleasant it is on the hills, you must live in the warmth of the city in order to derive the full benefit of the waters, whether in bathing or drinking, or both. Whether he use the water or not, I think that a man is almost sure to get acclimatised in that, or any other place, if he has full occupation for mind and body. To those who have nothing to do, and nothing to think of, climate in any place is ever a source of distress and complaint. The weather is either too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry; not because it really is so, but because the individual in question has nothing else to do but grumble and complain. It is a great thing to be engaged, with heart, mind, and body, in whatever you have to do, more especially so when the occupation is for God. He can make all climates agreeable and salutary. I believe that "man is immortal till his work is done," if he will but devote himself to the Lord for His service.

For my own part, I was astonished to find how well I was in the place which I had so much dreaded. Being able to live and work here without alcoholic stimulants was altogether beyond my expectation. But I did so for all that, and was able to labour incessantly, from nine o'clock in the morning till eleven and sometimes twelve at night, hurrying from one meeting to another, and from one person to others.

A Christian physician, who kindly took much interest

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* The Romans discovered these springs, and constructed the baths, which are still in use, and which have been the means of relief to thousands of sufferers in many generations.

in my health and work, used to watch over me and prescribe little globules. He sounded my chest, and asked about my left side, saying that he did not know how I lived, and told me that I should go off suddenly one day, and without warning. "You are just kept alive for your work," he said. "You will have to go when it is done. Look out and be ready, for you will go out like the snuff of a candle."

Dear man, that is exactly how he went himself, with very little warning, only two years afterwards. Happily he was ready, and waiting for the Master's call.

In the summer of this year I was advised to go away into the country with my family for five or six weeks. For this purpose a lady generously gave me an ample cheque, and when I accepted it she said, " Now, you are bound in honour to go, you know—and stay away; none of your going out, and being here too, remember. You must go, and remain away, all of you. If you want more money, write and say so."

Having acceded to her wishes, I asked, "Where shall we go?" She said, "To Freshford."

The necessary arrangements being completed, we took a carriage and drove out into the country. On our way we passed one or two enticing-looking villages; but they were not Freshford; so we proceeded onwards, and in due time arrived at the place of that name. Not meeting with any suitable lodgings, we were on the point of returning to Bath, when we heard of Mrs. M——'s house, which we were told had been vacated that very morning. On arriving there I inquired of a nice-looking young person, who opened the door, whether they had any apartments to let. She said, that she would go in and ask her mother, who (forgetting, perhaps, that every one was not as deaf as herself) said aloud, "Are there any children?" "Yes," answered her daughter. "Then say, No." Something more was said, which I did not wait to hear, thinking I had heard quite enough. I went back to the carriage saying, "They will not take children here: so we had better go back again."

Just then Mrs. M—— herself came out, and after a few minutes' conversation said, "Come all of you in; I'll have you, and make you as comfortable as I can."

She afterwards told us that when she bid her daughter refuse, the Lord rebuked her for her selfishness; and although the girl urged her not to receive us, saying, "There's such a lot of children; and they look like sickly, troublesome people," she was yet obliged to come out and accept us. That she had found we were neither sickly nor troublesome, but Christian people, whom the Lord had sent to bring a great blessing to her house, and to the neighbourhood.

In the evening we invited her and her household to our family worship. This she "enjoyed very much," as she said, and begged to be allowed to come again in the morning.

To our surprise, there were eight people besides her family assembled for morning prayers. These all professed to be "much pleased," and said that they would like to come again in the evening; but "could we be so good as to hold our meeting at eight o'clock?"

"Certainly," I said.

At that hour the room was full, also the passage outside; so we opened the window for the benefit of those who were standing in the garden. Mrs. M——'s two daughters were awakened that night, and one of them found peace; the other did so four days afterwards; then their brother; and lastly their father. Thus all the family were brought to know and rejoice in the Lord.

In the meantime the village was roused, and I was asked to hold my meeting in a vacant schoolroom which was placed at my disposal. There it pleased God to commence a good work at once. It seemed as if the train had been laid and everything was ready, needing only the match to be applied for the fire to burn. Burn it did, and the lamps of many were kindled at it, who lived to be bright and shining lights in the neighbourhood. It was most interesting to see the readiness with which people came to the meetings, and to witness the prepared state of their minds. It was great joy to show them the simple way of salvation. Young and old, rich and poor together, were under the melting influence of the Holy Spirit.

Of course all this did not take place without opposition; and not a few of the neighbours, instead of rejoicing in the Lord's work, became exceedingly angry. Some of them called after us in the street, and when we were assembled in the meeting, they gratified themselves by throwing heavy stones upon the roof. I begged the people to be still, and not to notice this wilful disturbance. "It is all right," I said; "I would far rather have this opposition than smooth indifference, though I am sorry for the persons who thus employ themselves."

Another day stones were thrown at the windows with disastrous effect, so that the people put up their umbrellas toward the side which was being assailed. Well it was they did so, for the broken glass came against the outspread calico or silk, and cut through more than one of these shields. Again I bid the people be still, adding, "I am delighted to see and hear this disturbance; for it is a sign the Lord is working, and that the devil is angry at the Gospel being brought to this quiet place. I think we shall have much blessing here. It is not at all unlikely that some of these very men and boys who have broken the windows will be converted. I will have the windows mended to-morrow, and perhaps before the month is out those who broke the glass, or instigated others to do so, will pay for the damage." And so, indeed, it came to pass.

In these and other meetings souls were converted every day, and the work continued without interruption all the time we were there; and was carried on by others after we left, and spread to several villages beyond.

The vicar of the parish, who lived half a mile off, heard of these things, but he did not come near us, nor did I care to make him in any way responsible for myself or my doings; therefore I did not compromise him by asking his consent. I heard that the "lady bountiful" of the parish was very angry with us, and did what she could to urge him to stop our proceedings; but for all that, he did not appear on the scene, or utter any prohibition. On the contrary, one morning as I was riding up to a gate, he kindly opened it for me, and taking off his hat politely, said, "You have been opening the door of salvation to my people: I am happy to open this gate for you. Good morning." He then went off, as if not caring to say too much. Soon after this he sent a note inviting me to preach in his church on a particular Sunday, as "I was popular amongst the people, and he wished to go away." This I was happy to do. So far we had his concurrence, which was pleasant.

The Sunday that I officiated for him we had the church filled from end to end three times. The great lady was not there; and how she settled the matter with the vicar for going away at such a time, and worse still, for leaving a wolf like me in charge of the flock, I do not know.

There was great power, and God's presence was very manifest in the church. I believe the word of God was not spoken in vain that day.

One remarkable case is worthy of record for the interest and instruction it affords.

The sexton of the church, who was a hardened and very unlikely personage, was awakened. He said that he did not know why he came to listen to the preaching, for generally speaking he preferred to be outside when the "sermon was in hand." He was surprised to hear the character of God represented as that of a loving and forgiving Father; for he had always thought of Him as the *Avenger* who would certainly catch him one day, and pay him off for all his wickedness. But when I appealed to the congregation, and pointed out to them the sin and shame of slighting such love as God's, and showed them the awful danger they incurred by refusing His invitation, he said, he "could not stand it."

This man was thoroughly broken-down, and found pardon and peace in believing. He rejoiced with much joy and great boldness, and did not fear to tell of his change of heart whenever he had the opportunity. "You know," he said, looking earnestly at the people to whom he spoke, "you know what a sinner I have been, a drunkard and swearer, indeed everything that's bad; and here, look here, the Lord have saved *my* soul."

This personal testimony had great effect at our meetings, for his former character was well known. On one occasion a hardened shoemaker fell down on his knees and cried for mercy; because, as he afterwards told us, he saw this man in the meeting, and it made him tremble all over. Such fear fell on him that it "settled" him, and he could not help himself.

With all this joy and bold testimony I could see that there was something still standing in the sexton's way. While I was speaking about the love of God to him, he was absorbed in that, and happy enough; but in the intervals he hung about, as if he had a trouble on his mind, which made him restless.

Some months after this he came to me and said he could not go on any longer as he was, for he was wretched, and felt that he must give himself up to a magistrate. He said other people were implicated, or he would go and tell at once. I did not care to press him for his secret, as he did not offer to tell me; but I prayed with him that he might be guided aright, and if there was anything that ought to come out, I asked the Lord to make it quite clear.

A few months after I received a note written for him by some one else, as he could not write. In this note he communicated to me his satisfaction, saying, "The secret is out now—it's such a burden off my mind!"

I went off to Freshford immediately to inquire into this mysterious matter. I was told that while some person was talking of his conversion in a public-house, a man who was there exclaimed, "*He* converted! the greatest scoundrel under the sun. Why, he's the man what strips the lead off the old coffins in the vaults!" This information spread like wildfire, and was good news to the opposition. They rejoiced at having such a charge to bring against a bright and happy convert, although the accusation referred to something that happened before his conversion, and for which he was deeply grieved; yet they did not scruple to make the most of it in order if possible to bring discredit upon the work of God.

When I arrived I found that this poor man was as glad at the discovery as his opponents; and for a far better reason. He said, "I'm so thankful this has all come out without my peaching a word. I never told about the other!"

He was tried, together with his accomplices, and found guilty; indeed, he confessed his part of the business, and acknowledged the justice of his punishment. He was sent to prison for twelve months. At the end of that time he himself wrote telling me that he had come out of prison, and that he had learned to read and write. The chaplain had been very kind, and had often read and prayed with him. When any one threw it up in his teeth that he had done such and such things, "Yes," he said, "I have, and more than that: but thank God, He has pardoned me: and as far as the law is concerned, I've paid the penalty; and now I'm a free man, and I know better."

The blessing and benefit of our visit to Freshford was not confined to the people of the place, for there happened to be some of the upper classes from Bath lodging in the neighbourhood who attended the services. One of these was a wealthy lady who for want of some better outlet and occupation poured out her heart in sympathy towards "dumb animals." "Poor dumb creatures," she used to say, "they cannot speak for themselves." It often surprised me to see what time and attention she bestowed upon these animals, while she gave no thought about dead and dumb souls, who did not pray or sing to God. This lady was awakened, and led to seek and find salvation. Nevertheless, her ruling passion remained very strong, and she continued to bestow her liveliest sympathies on the lower creation.

One evening as she was making her way to the meeting, she saw a delicate lady, who was riding a donkey, thrown to the ground by the stumbling and fall of the animal. Involuntarily she signified her deep feeling towards the poor brute, saying, "Pretty fellow, I hope he is not hurt." "I hope not," said the lady, rising slowly from the ground without any assistance; "but I think I am."

However, this remark did not draw much attention or regard to herself, for the soul of the great lady was engaged elsewhere. What kind of awakening or conversion hers could have been for her to remain so unchanged, I cannot tell. I dare not say that Christ was not the object of her faith; but it was most evident that her affection was not set on things above. It seemed to be her mission to take thought for the lower creation. Thank God that there are such people; but surely *Christians* should care not only for this, but for something beyond also.

One evening, as I was returning from our usual gathering, I overtook two young ladies walking along the way, and heard one say to the other, "Well, it is no use; I cannot give up the world!"

"Do you say so?" was the reply.

"No," she repeated, "I mean it; I really cannot."

"If that is the case," I said, "you had better not come to the meeting any more. I should advise you to go back to Bath. There you will see a great many flaming bills in all colours, announcing concerts and theatricals. Why not go to such places of amusement, and make up your mind to be as happy as you can in this world, for it is all the heaven you will ever have?" I went on to say what a pity it was that people should lose both worlds by being undecided. I told her that I once knew a gentleman who was a great man and exceedingly rich; he was the possessor of houses, lands, and mines of untold wealth. I was informed that when he came of age he made a speech, in which he said, in the hearing and with the applause of his friends (such as they were), that he intended to be a rich man, even though he went to hell for it. God heard him, and let him have his choice to the full. He not only granted him abundant riches, but let him live beyond the span of man's life, to the age of seventy-five. Then he died, full of years and opulence, but he had a dreadful death. I do not think bright angels came from glory to take his soul home with them—far otherwise! If you will not, or cannot, give up the world, then decide to keep it and make the most of it."

I spoke on in this strain till we reached the gate which the young lady was about to enter. Taking out a packet of tracts from my pocket, I found one entitled, "Making a Road to Hell." "Here," I said, "this is just the one for you: you will not take the road which God has already made to heaven; therefore, you must make one for yourself to the other place."

She took the tract in silence and went in.

The next day her mother was very angry because her child, as she called her, was so unhappy. In the evening the said "child" came again to the meeting, though I had told her to stay away; and she was there on the following day also.

The third evening she waited behind, and asked me if I thought that God had heard what she said about not giving up the world. I replied, "Most certainly He did."

Then she burst into tears and sat down as though in despair. "Do you think, then, God will never forgive me?"

I replied, "Shall we ask Him?"

She said, "Oh yes, do; please do," and we knelt down. She prayed most earnestly for forgiveness, and gave her heart without reserve to God.

The next day she was rejoicing with us; and from that time became a very downright and earnest Christian. She forsook the world, having something better to cling to, and amongst other things gave up singing the foolish love-songs she used to indulge in, for better music. On one occasion she was ordered by her mother to go to a musical party, and was dragged to the piano to sing. After a little hesitation she commenced, and sang with great feeling,

"Too late! too late! you cannot enter now."

Her voice and tone carried such meaning with them, that the company was moved to tears. At this, her mother was exceedingly angry, and declared that she had quite spoiled the evening's amusement, and that she would never take her out again.

CHAPTER XI.

Hindrances.

1861.

OUR sojourn at Freshford was a truly happy time, and one of much blessing. We had had a change of air, together with plenty of work for God, and we returned to Bath with renewed health and zeal. Here I needed all the encouragements I could get; for my people were very perplexing, and their goodness (that is, of those who had any) was "as a morning cloud, and as the early dew" (Hosea vi. 4).

Besides the anxiety of these slippery converts, I had to bear the obloquy, slander, and idle tales which were circulated about me, and to some extent believed.

One day a clergyman, whom I had often heard of as slandering and opposing us, called on me at a time of some defection from our ranks (at which I knew he was delighted), and said, he had heard so much about the work that was going on, under my teaching, that he wanted to know further particulars, and whether I was "satisfied and happy." "Do you find that any of your converts go back, my brother?"

"Go back," I repeated, "of course they do—do not your converts go back?" He did not answer. "Did you ever know or hear of a work of God anywhere, in the Bible or out of it, when some did not go back? When there is no real work in a congregation, the devil does not care to interfere: that suits his purpose well enough, and he rather commends it; but where there is reality, he makes as many counterfeits as he can. Such as these are sure to fall away; and then people like yourself (excuse me for saying so) come out to make remarks about God's work in general. I do not for a moment assert that all are saved among my so-called converts; but merely that they profess to be so, and time shows whether or not the work is real. I have observed that some who at first make a loud profession go back, while others who make none come forward and abide. Truly, 'the wind bloweth where it listeth.' I cannot undertake to tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. I only act up to the best judgment I have."

He said he had paid me quite a long visitation, and was very glad he had called; for, after all, he found that he agreed with me a great deal more than I supposed, and so on. With this he took his departure.

I fully expected greater opposition than ever, and am convinced that I should have had it, if he had not received "preferement," as he called it, and been removed from the city.

A good "preferement" it was, for me also; for to this day I think some people believe that I made use of the money I received for the poor for my own purposes, and did a great many other bad things, which for my sake they are kind enough not to mention—they are so afraid of hurting me or hindering my usefulness! However, I felt then, and still do, that the abuse of some is the best praise I could have, and am content to let it be so. The offence of the Cross has not ceased; and certainly it had not at that time, and therefore persons like the one just mentioned took much exception to the manner in which I preached and worked.

On the other hand, I made no secret of my intense aversion to Gospel preachers who were satisfied to go on without conversions. Nothing to my mind could compensate for this barrenness. A man might have eloquence, knowledge of Scripture, and great popularity; but if he had no souls converted, and no seals to his ministry, I did not think much of him, or desire for a moment to follow his example. I much preferred to go on in my poor despised way, though I was regarded as "vulgar," and often spoken of as "next door to a Dissenter." This was not pleasant, to be sure; but I do not think it would have troubled me so much had it not hindered my usefulness.

Besides these evil reports about me personally, there was another charge which hindered the work even more effectually, and that was the imputation of Arminianism. Whether many people really understood the meaning of that long word or not, I do not know; but it was quite clear to the minds of some of the *good* people of this city, that I was an unmitigated free-willer—it was asserted that I had said, people could save themselves if they would; or that I could convert them if they came to me! There was a great jealousy for the *sovereignty* of God, as if I desired to dethrone Him, and take His place. I professed to hold and teach God's sovereignty as firmly as any of them, and loved that truth as much. But my desire was to show that God declared His sovereignty, not by keeping all the power in His own hand in an arbitrary way, and making man into a mere machine, but by giving him, as a reasoning and intelligent creature, freedom of will. There can be no such thing as virtue or moral responsibility, if man is not free.

I am ashamed on looking back to think how much I felt this opposition, and winced under it, as if I were really guilty of holding back part of the truth of God, when all the time I was endeavouring to set forth the whole truth in its perfectness as far as I knew it, that is to say, God's sovereignty, and with it man's responsibility; not neutralising them in combination, or holding one to the disparagement of the other; but contending for each in its proper place.

Moreover, I saw the blessed result of this teaching, and the unfruitful consequence of declaring only one of these important doctrines. To my mind God's truth is like an arch which stands on two bases, or opposite pillars. It cannot stand upon one, any more than a bird can fly with one wing, or with its two wings tied together.

Upon one occasion, at a large public meeting I had been asked to address, the chairman (who happened to be a somewhat important personage) took exception to my speech. He said it was very dishonouring to God—that I entirely ignored God's power and sovereignty; and that I invited people to *come* to Him, *as if they could do so.* "The fact is," he continued, "that the Gospel is as a magnet; God's elect people are as steel filings—all others are as common dust. When the Gospel is preached to a mixed congregation the former kind *must* come, and the latter *cannot* if they would. It is altogether useless to say '*Come*,' for it is impossible for any but God's *elect* children to obey."

The opportunity was too good a one to lose, and my opponent, from his influence and position, was worthy of challenge; so I stood up to reply. I should say that I was somewhat encouraged and strengthened in doing this, by a little circumstance which drew the attention and interest of the audience towards myself. The lady who had invited me to speak, and had also asked the great man to take the chair, came forward immediately after his speech, and said. "Never mind, Mr. Haslam, I quite agree with you, and feel that your address has done me good; I thank you from my heart." This caused no small sensation.

I commenced by telling a story, to which the people listened attentively. I said, Once upon a time, there was an old experienced Christian, who was a ferryman on the Clyde. One day he had the opportunity of carrying two gentlemen in his boat; the one a Calvinist, and the other an Arminian. They were having a hot dispute about their respective tenets, so that the ferryman could not get in a word edge-ways, though he was most anxious to do so. After trying several times, he bethought himself of this device—to pull the boat with one oar. The disputants stopped, and asked what he was doing. "Don't you like this?" said the boatman. Then putting down that oar, he took up the other, and pulled with both hands till the boat went round the other way. "What ever are you about?" said both the combatants. "Why," replied the veteran, "I call this oar Sovereignty, and that one Responsibility; and if I do not pull them *both together*, you will never get to the other side of the river."

This simple story caused some of my hearers to smile; but others who despised anecdotal addresses, and did not care for illustrations, particularly when they told against themselves, looked displeased, as did also the chairman. He soon afterwards dismissed the meeting, and took his departure.

This event only convinced me more and more of the impractical character of this "high doctrine" teaching.

In my address I had let down the nets into the deep, and felt that the Lord's presence was with me. I am sure that if the Word had been followed up with prayer, and the people had had an opportunity of yielding themselves, we might have seen results which would have been for the glory of God, and have proved that the kind of preaching for which I was contending was right. Instead of this, the impressions and thoughts of the meeting were completely dissipated by the controversial remarks of the chairman.

After this I made it my business to hear as many of the celebrated preachers of this doctrine as I could, not only in Bath, but elsewhere; especially those who were said to feed their people upon "strong meat." I confess that they were of one mind, and had a phraseology of their own. They certainly were in many cases able and great men; and I learnt much from their preaching, and took in many suggestions. But I must say, that I could not conscientiously agree with their interpretation of Scripture. Not that I for a moment disputed the Sovereignty of God, but with it, as I have already said, I believed in the responsibility of the persons to whom I preached. If it be asked, How do I reconcile these opposite statements? I answer, They require no reconciliation, any more than the Godhead and manhood of Christ. How can He be God and man too? This is a mystery beyond our comprehension; but, nevertheless, it is God's truth. Christ is God with Divine power, and also Man with human sympathies. So in Divine wisdom, God is *sovereign*, and man is *free*.

Speaking generally, I judged this teaching by its results. I saw unconverted people braced up with the thought that they were *the elect;* and instead of coming to the cross for pardon and salvation *now*, they rather relied on being brought somehow *by and by*. The Word does not say, "Wait till I fetch you;" but, "*Come*." And again, God does not *promise* salvation at some future time; but *offers* it in the present. So much for generalities.

Now to be more particular. In this teaching I saw three manifest mistakes in the interpretation of the Word.

1. It was assumed that the elect were the children of God, instead of regarding, as Scripture teaches us, the children of God as the elect. It is certain that no one can know of his election till after his conversion. St. Paul knew the election of the Thessalonian brethren, because he saw their "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. i. 3). When a man is converted or saved, we may be sure that it is an event which was known or foreknown before the foundation of the world. God must know who will, and who will not, accept His offer; and yet the invitation is a *bonâ fide* honest call. "Whosoever will" is written outside the door; and when a man is by God's grace saved and brought within, he may read on the inside, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." This most comforting assurance cannot be seen from the outside, either by the individual himself, or by any one else for him.

2. I observed that these preachers took it for granted that the Jews were finally rejected; and that in consequence, the blessings which were literally intended for them, are transferred spiritually to the elect in this dispensation. They say, that the seed of Abraham being put aside, the children of Abraham (spiritual believers) inherit the promises of God to him. On the other hand, St. Paul tells us "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew" (Rom. xi. 2). They are put aside for a time, because they rejected the Messiah, saying, "We will not have this man to reign

over us" (Luke xix. 14). But there is a day coming, when they shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" (Matt. xxi. 9). Then shall they be reconciled and converted, as Saul of Tarsus was, by *seeing* their coming Deliverer. After that, they shall possess the land given to Abraham, and the throne which was promised to David; together with all the covenant privileges which are now too often supposed to have been taken away from them. There is a glorious inheritance awaiting the Jews of the future, which is the great theme of the prophet Isaiah. He refers with joy to the time when He who was the despised and rejected of men shall be King, and reign over the whole restored earth and among His ancients gloriously (Isa. xxiv. 23). When the people (the Jews) praise God, the nations (the Gentiles) shall rejoice, and the earth then restored from the curse shall bring forth her increase, and God, their own God, shall give them (the Jews) His blessing. (Ps. lxvii.)

Not that there is no spiritual meaning to the prophecies of Isaiah and the prophetic utterances in the Psalms: indeed there is; but it is not exclusively to the elect, or those who think themselves so, as if they were the only redeemed ones of the earth! These promises, spiritually, really belong to those who not only know the Lord as their *Saviour*, but have also yielded their wills to Him as *King*, and have put the government of themselves upon His shoulder.

3. This brings me to the third mistake I discovered in the teaching of men of this school. I noticed that they did not see the second call which is given to us in the Word of God. They confuse the invitation *to come*, which is given to sinners, with the command *to follow*, which is laid upon believers. For example, they take such a passage as, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me" (John vi. 37), and suppose that this, and every similar text, refers to people given to Christ in election, and not salvation. When we believe in Christ for salvation we become His people; and over such He has a right of command—they "shall come;" but to those who have not yielded He can only use words of invitation. Because as yet they are free, He treats them as such, and even condescends in His love to beseech them to *come* to Him. When, however, they have yielded them-

selves, they are under His command; and it is then that He speaks out His purposes, and *His shalls.*

For the last twenty years I have been more confirmed in my opinion as to the reality of these mistakes; and as time passes on I see more clearly that they are a great hindrance to the progress of God's work.

It is most sad that any souls should be persuaded that they are *elect* before they are saved; and very trying it is to witness the Pharisaic pride with which they pity others who cannot see as they do. The very fact that souls are not awakened under this teaching to see themselves lost sinners, but are rather taught to regard themselves as the elect of God, and also that they become bitter partizans, surely ought to be sufficient marks to arouse the suspicion of every unprejudiced mind.

I saw, moreover, that besides the inevitable result of unsaved people being puffed up with the idea that they were "the elect of God," others were sent almost, if not altogether, into despair, because they could not see or feel that they were elect. Again, many others fell into a kind of fatalism, saying, "If I am elect, I shall be saved; and if I am not, I never shall be. Do what I will, there is no hope for me."

CHAPTER XII.

The Work in Winter.

1861–62.

THANK God, the work in Bath was not all disappointment or vexation of spirit, on account of the hindrances I have already mentioned, and of many others which need not be related.

Like all difficulties, however, we may be sure that these were not sent to hinder, but rather to try our faith. Nor were they all sent at the same time, though I have recorded them in one chapter. If the work is the Lord's, who shall let it? or what profit will it be if we take His burden upon our shoulders?

I did trust in God, and endeavoured daily to ascertain His will, by His Word and work together. I saw that the Word by itself was not enough; and also, that work by itself was not to be depended upon, even though it looked promising. But the Word and the work confirmed one another, just as a seal and its impression. Trusting God is not resting in feelings, or relying with mental firmness upon His promises; but a putting of self into, and upon Him, in obedience to His invitation. When I lie down in my bed my muscles are relaxed; they are resting from all effort; there is no holding on for safety: I simply let myself lie, and the specific gravity of my body keeps me in my place. In like manner, my helplessness in my work was the weight with which I rested in God. Trusting Him in this way, I found that He opened out His own work to my hand, and provided helpers one after another as they were needed, sometimes even before I knew that they were needed.

The services in the little church were continually blessed in a very manifest way. The number of persons who attended regularly increased to such an extent that it became necessary to enlarge the building. I made this the subject of prayer, but did not otherwise mention it. Soon the Lord put it into the heart of a lady to say, "You ought to enlarge your church. I will give you one hundred pounds towards it: or if you build a new one, I will give you a thousand; and I know some one else who will add five hundred or more."

My soul was now all astir for building. I felt as if some of my old architectural fervour was coming back; but before I could give my thoughts definitely to making plans, it was necessary to find a site whereon to build. It was clear to my mind that the new church ought to be in Avon Street, near the poor people for whom it was intended. Some thought otherwise, and suggested that I should build a good one in a more respectable position, with the idea that it would take these people out of the dreadful scenes of degradation to which they were accustomed, and in this way elevate them.

I could not agree to this proposition, for I saw that they did not care to go to such churches, though they had them within easy reach. I felt sure that to build a handsome church in a better situation would be but to add another fashionable one to the city, which had already a great many.

No, I preferred a site in the street, and found a most suitable one near the river, on a plot of ground covered with dilapidated cottages. This belonged to the Corporation, and what is more, was offered for sale at the easy sum of three hundred pounds. Making sure of obtaining it, I at once designed a plain, homely, though architectural, church for the poor, and set on foot inquiries about purchasing the ground. In course of time I received a most encouraging letter from an influential member of the Corporation, who said, that "if I would apply on a particular day, he would propose that the site should be granted me for nothing, because I had saved the town much expense in prosecutions." This statement drew my attention to the subject, and then I remembered that there used to be a long column in the daily papers headed "Avon Street," which contained a list of various crimes and offences. But now I saw that the charges for a whole week were not so many as they used to be in one day in former time. This was encouragement for me to go on with my work, and also to press for the church to be built among the people.

However, the opposition was greater than I cared to contend against, so I gave up the idea, and fell back upon the original plan of enlarging my little church.

Thus it was left to another to build the "handsome church" in a more respectable part of the city, which was done a few years after I left.

Strange to say, I happened to be passing through Bath the very day the first stone of St. Paul's Church was laid, without previously knowing that it was to be—and was present again, though only accidentally, when it was opened, at its completion. I hear that it is now a crowded and fashionable place of worship, and one to which the ragged people do not venture.

I set to work to enlarge my little church by building behind the end wall, and when the new addition was roofed and closed in, we took down the wall between, so that the services were not hindered. This enlargement being accomplished, the building was in the shape of a T, and held double the number of people it did before. We put up an organ, and an organist was provided, for us; also a lady, who was responsible for the choir and singing.

The old part of the edifice next to the street was made available for our present purposes: I used to call it "The Factory." There we had the Sunday-school, and the Mothers' meeting, and afterwards the day-school. The first, the Sunday-school, was an overwhelming perplexity, because of the unruly character of the lads and lasses who attended. Happily our superintendent, on his own responsibility, obviated the difficulty, by transposing the classes, giving the girls to the men teachers, and the boys to the ladies. Then the school prospered. I record this as a hint, which I hope may prove as useful to others under similar circumstances as it did to me.

The second, the Mothers' meeting, was much needed for civilising the women, and teaching them to make proper garments, in place of the rags in which their offspring were usually arrayed.

The third was a day-school; this I had desired ever since the break-up of that promising one mentioned in a previous chapter. The great need of a school had been so pressed upon me that I went to a lady, who held a Bible-class for young women, to ask whether she could recommend any one suitable for a schoolmistress. She said, that she thought the locality would be a difficulty, but promised to give me a definite answer on Monday afternoon.

Strange to say, on that very Monday morning, altogether unsolicited, there came a cheque from a lady of title who had received good at the church in Avon Street, "for the benefit of the place, and towards a school if possible." For this I thanked God, and felt sure of success.

That same afternoon I called upon the lady who had promised to inquire about a governess. She told me that one of her class had offered to take the situation, and had said, "It is an honour I could scarcely have aspired to, to work for the Lord in Avon Street. I will undertake it with pleasure; and a friend of mine will assist me." "Now," added the lady, "what about the money?"

"Here," I said, "is a cheque the Lord has sent to-day."

Looking at it, she exclaimed, "It is the Lord's school, and is sure to be a blessing. Will you let me have the management?"

I need scarcely say that I accepted her offer, and we thanked God together. The school was opened the next day, and did become a blessing to many. It was worked most efficiently in connection with the Mothers' meeting.

One of my lady helpers at this time had a brother, a colonel from India. He was much put about and very irate that his sister, "such a beautiful and accomplished young lady, should be working in a dreadful place like Avon Street. She sleeps at home, to be sure; but she lives down there all day. She must be mad!"

To my great surprise, one night I saw this same colonel on his knees among the beggars at the after-meeting. I could scarcely believe my eyes! I found him thoroughly broken down, and in deep distress of soul. His sister's prayers were heard. and the Word had at last penetrated his armour, and brought him in penitence to the Lord.

He became an out-and-out Christian, and worked diligently for the Master in this as well as other parts of the city. Before his conversion his idea of Christians was, that we were a very selfish and indulgent set. He said "he had observed in India, and in this country also, that if there was one chair or sofa in a luxurious drawing-room more easy and comfortable than another, there was sure to be a Christian in it."

One day after his conversion, when he was paying me a visit, I sent the servants up-stairs to fetch down a large and particularly easy-chair from one of the bed-rooms. They brought the unwieldy thing down as well as they could (laughing as they came), into the room where we were sitting. "There, Colonel," I said, "look, there is the Christian's chair, and now you are entitled to sit in it."

"Ah, yes—yes—I remember all that, and a deal more," he said thoughtfully, looking at the chair. "I am ashamed to think how strong my prejudice was. I used to feel quite a hatred against some of the Lord's people, though they tried to be kind to me."

He would not sit in the chair, but we talked about the stumblingblocks that some believers are to the world. He said he "could not understand some of the Bath Christians at all." In reference to a certain drawing-room meeting at which we had both been present, he remarked that "that evening he found it difficult to give his attention to the good things that were said, for looking at the get-up of some of the gentlemen in dress coats and kid gloves, also the ladies in full evening dress, with bare necks and arms bedecked with chains, bracelets, and rings, with flowers in their hair. Is that the right and correct thing for a Bible reading?"

He went about his work for God in a most methodical and business-like way, finding out anxious souls and sick people, also some cases of real temporal distress. Among other things, he arranged Bible-readings and drawing-room addresses for me. By this means I had sometimes as many as three or four gatherings a day, besides all my work in the district.

At certain houses we took Prophecy for our subject week after week; in others Scripture characters in succession; and in others again, the Jews. We followed their history from Abraham to the time of their rejection, and from thence to that which awaits them in the future—their reconciliation and restoration to God's favour, and their usefulness among the Gentiles.

We did not confine our attention to the mere history of, or prophecy concerning, this wonderful people, but concluded every meeting with an experimental or spiritual application to ourselves. For instance, do we believe as Abraham, and come out at God's bidding? Do we trust and rely upon promised blessings as Isaac did? Or, do we with Jacob depart from simple trust in God with an "*If*," and consequently resort to all kinds of devices and inventions of our own to secure the success we desire. Are we come clear out of Egypt? The Lord God has sent His own Son Jesus Christ to be our Apostle and High Priest, our Moses and Aaron, to bring us out.

I endeavoured to show how the power of Satan is exercised to hold us back, as Pharaoh held back the children of Israel.

1. He refused altogether to let them go, and commanded that greater burdens should be laid upon them. (Ex. v. 4-7.)
2. Then he said, if you must worship God, do so here in Egypt. (Ex. viii. 25.)
3. If you must worship in the wilderness, go and do so; but abide in Egypt. (Ex. viii. 28.)
4. If you must go out of Egypt to serve the Lord, then leave your children here. (Ex. x. 11.)
5. If you must take your children, leave your cattle. (Ex. x. 24.)

"And Moses said, Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind" (Ex. x. 26). "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters; with our flocks and with our herds will we go: for we must hold a feast unto the Lord" (Ex. x. 9).

In like manner it is spiritually with us now.

1. When people are awakened by the power of God, and they endeavour to seek and pray, Satan puts great and greater difficulties in their way. If they do not rise above them, they remain discouraged and give up seeking for pardon and release altogether.
2. If they continue to seek salvation in spite of difficulties, Satan urges them to become worshippers *in Egypt*, that is, in an unconverted state.
3. If they are converted, then they are enticed by the tempter to live in conformity with the world, as if they were still of it.
4. If they must be out-and-out decided Christians *themselves*, then they are urged to allow their children to be brought up according to the customs of the world. This is too often yielded to, even by Christian parents, who think it *their duty*, when their young people are grown up, to go out "a little into worldly society," in order to launch them off!

5. If you will go, and take your children too, then Satan suggests—Be poor, leave your property; for what can Christians want with worldly wealth and grandeur? In this way some are tempted to put themselves out of the position in which God converted them, and in which station of life He intended their light should shine. There is but one rule for all, rich and poor, one with another; that is, that when they are saved, they should offer and present themselves a living sacrifice to God, which is their reasonable service.

Then I went on to speak of believers who are only under the sprinkled blood, not yet out of Egypt. I contrasted their state with those who had passed the Red Sea, and could sing of redemption, and deliverance—on the Rock, praising God. How very many Christians there are who have no liberty, because they continue on the wrong side of the grave of Christ! They are ever at Calvary, instead of standing on *resurrection ground*, looking to the Throne of Grace.

From the failures of the children of Israel in the wilderness we took warning; and derived instruction from the example of Joshua and others like him. The former sought relief from trouble by looking back—the latter in looking forward. The one in comparing difficulties with themselves—the other in comparing them with the Lord. The one relied upon gaining victory over Amalek by their fighting—the other by virtue of the hands of Moses being held up!

Like Joshua, we should rely upon the Lord in the wilderness, as One who *can* deliver; and in Canaan, as One who *does* so,—thus making us conquerors, and more than conquerors, by His grace.

When the Israelites were not faithful to their covenant God, He sent them into captivity; not back into Egypt, but into Babylon. So, Christians who break communion with God (though they are united with Him), are taken captive into spiritual Babylons, of various kinds.

When the Jews rejected the Lord, and would not have Him for their King, they were scattered. In like manner, Christians are divided from one another in their respective bodies and denominations, for the same reason—that is, because Christ is not the acknowledged King and Ruler of them all.

One thing alone can unite the Jews again. It is not their return to their own land, for that will be only as "bone coming to his bone" (Ezek. xxxvii. 7); but when the Lord Himself shall come and breathe upon them. Then, and not till then, shall they stand up a living and great army, with the Lord as their King. This also is the true bond of union among believers now: not when we join in one Church, or agree to differ; but when we who believe in Him as Jesus who pardons sins, and as Christ who delivers from the power of sin, go on to own Him as Lord—the Lord Jesus Christ, with all power in heaven and on earth. Then shall we be united, and not till then.

These meetings proved a happy and profitable time for us during the winter months.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Power of Grace.

1862.

IN the foregoing chapters I have given a continuous account of one year's work. Obviously space would not allow me to dwell with the same fulness of detail on the work of successive years. Suffice it to say, that it went on with increasing interest and energy, though not without difficulties and opposition. The work was not mine; and if I laboured abundantly it was as the Apostle says, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

By the "grace of God" I do not mean a doctrine, an influence, or an evanescent emotion—but a REAL POWER; that of a Person present, albeit He is unseen. Grace is the power of a present Christ delivering, or keeping, as the case may be. When we read of "the grace of God that bringeth salvation," we may say that it is the Christ of God that bringeth salvation. We may say also, that it is the same personal Christ who goes on to teach us "to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

I notice that the effect of grace upon the soul is, generally speaking, more discernible in poor and uncultured people than in others. For this reason: they are not biassed by any theories or systems, which too often have an undue influence with the educated. I will give two instances of the saving and keeping power of this grace of God, as I saw it exemplified in the lives of people in my district.

One morning in the spring, while the cold of winter still continued and the frost was sharp, a man came to me in the vestry begging. He was arrayed in a soldier's scarlet jacket, and told me he had a wife and five children, who were starving. I said, "Well, they may as well starve first as last, if you will not turn your hand to some steady work to maintain them. You are an able-bodied man, in good health; and by the look of you, I should say you are sharp enough to be a clever workman, if you choose."

He replied that he had no work, and could not get any. I met this difficulty by offering him employment at once, which would enable him to support his family. I had a wood-splitting shed for the purpose of helping such cases as his.

He said, "He did not care to do that work; besides, he would not mix with such company as I had there for something!" I replied, "I greatly admire your self-respect: I only wish you had a little more of it, and then you would give up this disreputable begging life, going about as if you had been a soldier. Were you ever a soldier?" "Oh yes, I've been along with the army, to be sure." "Indeed," I replied, "where did you enlist?" Not being satisfied with his answer, I said, "Tell me where it was you took the Queen's shilling." This put him somewhat out of his depth and he looked confused. I continued, "Now you may as well tell the truth at once; the fact is, you people get into such a habit of lying that you can scarcely speak without it." He smiled, and said, "Well, I had the will to be a soldier, though I never really enlisted." Then he began to whine and coax me even with tears, which I must say were conveniently ready for his purpose.

I remained inexorable, and said, "You evidently live very near the water-side; but you must work if you wish me to help your family. I suppose you and your wife are bringing up the children to be practised beggars like yourselves. I will not encourage it." Then he became angry, and said that "the like of me preached fair enough, but we were nothing more than a set of canting hypocrites; we talked very well, but when we were asked to do any good we never did it." "Well," I replied, "if that is my character I must keep it up. I will do nothing for you; so you had better go, and let some one else come in."

He then threatened to tell the rector, and everybody round the town, that I received money for the poor and kept it for myself. "Very well, do so—go now," I replied.

Finding that these devices were not successful, he changed his tone, and said he really did not know which way to turn. Would I lend him a little money—just a sixpence?

"No," I said, "I have no money for lending. I will give you work; and I think, for your children's sake, you ought to take it. I must say I should not mind *your* starving, for I think you deserve it; but they do not. What can you do?" He smiled, and said, "There are few things I can't do. I can turn my hand to anything." "Then tell me one." "Well," he said, thinking a little, "the warmest work for the fingers in this weather is to make cocoa-nut door mats. Let me have some materials, and I'll turn you out a good article."

"Agreed," I said: so putting on my hat, I sallied forth, under the leading of my barefooted, limping soldier, to a shop where he knew I could procure the needed materials. Then I returned with him to his garret and saw his wife and five children. At first they looked somewhat astonished at our appearance, but were evidently delighted at the prospect of work. I offered my services as salesman for them. "Oh," said the man, "I know where to sell a mat, and get a good price for it too." In the meantime I supplied the party with coals, soup, bread, and other necessaries; calling in now and then to see how they went on.

The mat being finished, the man duly sold it, and then procured more materials wherewith to make others. Thus the little garret soon turned into an active factory. I talked to the wife about her soul, while the husband and children went on working. She told me that she was a Roman Catholic, and went regularly to mass; but she had never heard of such a thing as people being saved in this world! She was quite surprised to hear me say in such a positive manner, and with the Bible in my hand, that no one could possibly be saved in the next world. I told her that God willed not the death of the sinner, and had given His own Son to die, that we who believe in Him may be saved in this life. She had a prejudice in her mind, and a veil on her heart; and said that she "would not believe anything that the priest did not teach."

Her husband, however, was quietly listening, though apparently absorbed in his work; and while she was clinging to her erroneous dogmas as truth, the truth itself, by the power of God's Spirit, was taking hold of him. A few days afterwards I heard from a neighbour of his, that S—— was converted, and that a wonderful change had come upon him. I went immediately to hear more about this, and I found that the man was indeed changed, and very different to what he used to be.

I said, "Why did you not tell me about yourself?"

"Because," he replied, "you have found me out in so many lies, that I didn't think you would ever believe me again; but the truth on it is, that while you were talking to my missus, and reading the Bible to her, something went through me like a shock. I could have hollered out; but I didn't, for I knew you'd have thought me a putting it on for deception. Thank God, I can see it all now!" His tone, his look, and his words agreed with this statement, and his acknowledgment, that he did not deserve to be believed, was so genuine that I could not help praising God. When he perceived that I really believed and trusted him, he burst into tears.

This was the beginning of a work of grace in his soul, which afterwards extended to his wife and daughter.

He turned out a most clever and careful man. He could do gardening, beat carpets, and clean windows. But as he rightly said, these "didn't require much brains: he could do a lot more—he could polish up my old piano, and make it look like a new un; or he could hang them there curtains a deal better than they were," he said, pointing to the windows: in short, he could write a drama. As I certainly did not want the last, I let him try his hand on the curtains, which needed some alteration, having been put up in a hurry. He showed great taste, and evident skill in upholstering; so that after a little hesitation I consented to his taking the piano in hand also: it had been sorely rubbed and scratched in the journey up from Cornwall.

There was a back room in the house which we did not use, so we allowed him to take the instrument there. In an hour or two he made such an object of it that I was dismayed, and my heart sank within me; for I never expected he could make it presentable again. He said, "Never you fear; wait a little!" Then he applied some stuff which he called "dragon's blood," mixing it with I know not what else. In a few days he made the old thing look as smart as any new piano in the city.

He was soon in great request, and made his way from one house to another. He was trustworthy, and bore a good testimony wherever he went; indeed, he became a real missionary of the gospel both in the parlour and the kitchen. I persuaded him to remain in Avon Street, that he might be an example to others, showing what the grace of God could do in a family, and proving that there was no necessity for lapsing into all the squalor and untidiness of the place.

Thus in the darkness and more than heathen ignorance which prevailed, we were not without God's witnesses here and there, who shone out like stars in a cloudy night.

Such, in a remarkable degree, were an afflicted couple of whom I will now tell. These were both sharply afflicted with rheumatism. The wife was completely helpless, and obliged to keep her bed altogether; the husband was a little better. Being able to sit up he was taken out of bed in the morning, and placed in a chair, where he remained till the evening. He had another advantage over his wife, which was, that he could move one hand sufficiently to feed himself.

These poor sufferers felt every change of the weather, and were frequently in acute pain, but bore it without murmuring; though they spoke in thankfulness when they were in any measure relieved. It was most edifying to witness their quiet patience, and the sweet contentment which they manifested. One day in conversing about the will of God, they told me, that sometimes they condemned themselves for being together, in that comfortable room, and with their own married daughter to wait on them. They said, they had agreed to give their will to God many years ago, that when they were afflicted and disabled there was nothing before them but the workhouse, where they would have to be separated. They could not bear the thought of that, so they begged the Lord to let them have a little room somewhere.

"Here we are," said the wife, "and have been for years. A kind lady pays our rent. Do you think it was wrong to make that request?"

"No," I replied, "I am very glad you did. God is kind, and I have no doubt He put it into your hearts; thank Him for His love, and be still."

"Oh," she said, "it's cruel of the devil to come to us so often, and tell us we are doing our own will in staying here; that we are afraid to take up our cross, and go to the workhouse. He says to us, 'What will you do when the lady dies? You will have to go then!'"

Poor things, we had a good cry together over their troubles; and to comfort them I said, "Do not be afraid; continue to trust God, He cannot die: and if the lady should be called away, He can very easily find some one else to help you."

"There, Peter," exclaimed the wife, "didn't I tell yer that?"

"Oh," said the husband, who was evidently the weaker vessel, "I've got so little faith, I do get these ere doubts so much."

"Yes," added the wife, "and yer keeps them, Peter, and brings them to me."

Some months after this I saw in the newspapers the announcement of the sudden death of their benefactress. At first I was afraid to tell them; but lest they might hear it roughly from some one else, I resolved to go and break the painful news to them as tenderly as I could, wondering how they would bear it. They were both silent for some time; then the woman, in her bright and placid way, said, "Thank God for all the kindness that dear good lady did to us; and thank God, *He* is not dead."

"That is right," I said; "do not be afraid: I will be responsible for the rent for a month." It was only two shillings a week. Before the end of this time I found some one else who was willing and happy to retain the room for them. Thus the rent came regularly, though they did not know from whom.

One Saturday the lady gave me the four shillings for "Happy Peter," requesting that I would take it that day. I promised to do this, but was unavoidably prevented; and all the next day (Sunday) I tried in vain to do so. Early on Monday morning I went; and as I entered the room, I overheard the wife say, "There, Peter, I told you it wasn't him." I put down the four shillings on the table, saying, "I am so sorry I could not bring this on Saturday." They still went on talking in an undertone; so I asked, "What is it about!" The wife replied, "Why, the collector usually comes for the fortnight's rent on Saturday afternoon. Last week my old man was in a great fright 'cause we had no money; but the collector didn't come. This morning when we heard your step, Peter said, 'There, that's him: what shall we say?' I said, 'No, it ain't; I feel sure the Lord won't let him come till the rent is here: why won't yer trust Him?'"

"Well," said Peter, evidently relieved at seeing the money on the table, "the wife is right: and now the man may come as soon as he likes; I'm not afraid." With this we dropped the subject, and went on to talk of other things. While conversing, there came a knock at the door, and in walked the collector. He took up the four shillings laid out on the table, and making a note in his book, said, "I only wish they would all pay up as you do: good morning," and went away. I remarked, "That man did not know what he said, or who pays your rent!" We thanked God together; for though this was but one instance of His continued goodness, it was nevertheless worthy of grateful acknowledgment.

I could tell much about these dear people, but space will not permit; one thing more, however, I must find room for. One day I took a timid Christian to see "Happy Peter" and his wife, in the hope that they might give him a practical lesson in faith. I knew they would be sure to come straight to the vital point at once, and that no answer but a direct affirmative, or as decided a negative, would satisfy them. It was so; and having ascertained that my friend was saved, and dared not say he was not, they thanked God. Perceiving the cheerfulness of this afflicted couple, my friend asked Peter how long he had been as happy as he then appeared.

"Thirty-seven years, thank God," was the reply.

"That is a long while, to be sure. Do you mean to say that you have never had a cloud all that time?"

"Cloud," repeated Peter, looking at his suffering wife, and remembering the manifold trials they had passed through. "Yes, indeed, we have had many clouds, and some dark ones too; but where are the blessed showers to come from?"

"Well done, Peter!" I cried, "that is worth coming for."

The nervous gentleman went away, saying, "I suppose this kind of assurance is only a matter of temperament, is it not? Everybody cannot be like that." I did not agree to this: I could not help saying that the grace of God was sufficient; and that nervous people, of a naturally trembling temperament, were the very ones who glorify God most by such assurance. The weak ones need it most. And when souls are wholly yielded to God, He can, by His grace, transform them by the renewing of their minds, and out of weakness bring forth strength. The strong He is obliged to make *weak*, before He can do anything with them. Gideon was told, "Go in this thy might:" emptiness and weakness were his strength. Moses, that strong, hasty man, had to be brought down to his nothingness before he could become "meek." John and James, the "sons of thunder," who were ready to call down fire from heaven, were brought down before they could be exalted. Peter, the confident, had to learn to distrust himself; and the vehement Saul of Tarsus had to learn the lesson, "when I am weak, then am I strong."

The power of grace is transforming as well as strengthening. It makes us different to our natural selves, and strong enough to become conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.

CHAPTER XIV.

Visit to Cornwall.

1862.

IN the beginning of this summer I received a letter from a Vicar in the far west of Cornwall, asking if I could arrange to come with my family for six weeks, and take charge of his church and parish during his absence. This was exactly what I desired: so, thanking God, I accepted the invitation and arranged to go. The weather being calm and fair, we decided to take the steamer from Bristol to Hayle, and accordingly wrote to our friends there to expect us the next morning.

Along the Bristol river, and until past the Holmes, we experienced no inconvenience, the water being very smooth. As we went farther on, however, the vessel commenced to roll and pitch, causing us all to blanch more or less, and to feel uncomfortable. The farther we proceeded the larger were the waves, and greater still the effect upon ourselves. There was a strong head-wind, and the waves of the great Atlantic were sullenly rolling in long hills and valleys after some storm by which they had been stirred. Our vessel was sadly tossed, and the passengers were very ill.

To our dismay, when the time arrived at which we expected to get into harbour and smooth water, we were told that we had missed the tide, and must stay out in the bay for eight or nine hours longer. Here the waves were larger and the ground-swell much heavier than ever. It was a dreadful morning, and we were helplessly and hopelessly sick, and had to remain so all day till nightfall. At last to our joy we saw the harbour signal, denoting that there was water enough to carry the vessel over the bar. We crossed it in safety, and entered the little tidal harbour at Hayle about ten o'clock at night, after a voyage of twenty-five hours instead of fourteen or fifteen. We were very ill, starved, dejected, and feeling as if no one cared for us; the natural consequences, I suppose, of our condition.

As we advanced we could see a great crowd of people on the shore, and soon I distinguished a loud familiar voice shouting to the captain, "Is Mr. Haslam on board?" "All right," he replied; "they are all aboard." Immediately there went up a loud and long cheer from the people. When the steamer reached the quay, friends came jumping on deck to greet us. One immediately claimed us for his guests. I thanked him and assented. While I was engaged looking after our luggage, another friend took possession of my dear wife, and carried her off with two or three of the children. A third, who found that he could neither get her nor myself, made off with the nurse and the remaining children.

Thus we were all scattered about here and there at eleven o'clock at night. I did not know where to find my wife; and she did not know where to look for me or the rest of the children. I had the luggage; and other people had those to whom it belonged. There was no doubt whatever that they were all most affectionately housed and cared for long before I was; so, being far from well, I retired, determining to prosecute a search the next morning, or if necessary, to send round the crier.

That day we spent among our warm-hearted friends, and heard (with tears) many stories of their present unhappy and spiritually starved condition. They went for bread and got a stone, and sometimes it was "cruel hard." Yet many of them were "sticking on," as they called it, to the Church.

In the evening we proceeded to Paul-beyond-Penzance, and there found a happy people ready to receive us. We had a meeting of course, and the next day also, which made a good preparation for Sunday.

On Sunday the church was filled to excess three times. We held the after-meeting in the evening at the schoolroom, which was also filled; souls were given that night, and many nights after. The spark had come to the stubble of willing minds, and the Cornish men were ready and open enough to let themselves fully out. We had believers rejoicing aloud, and sinners crying for mercy at the same time. This was the best cure for sea-sickness and every other ailment.

I soon recovered myself, and could not help the thought arising in my mind: Why this difference? Is not God the same in Bath as in Cornwall? Is not His Word the same, and its power equally great? Then why this contrast, as great as that of the poles and the tropics? In the one place we had, for the most part, civilization of the highest polish and religiousness of the most evangelical type; in the other a roughness equal to the stormy climate, and an ignorance of Scripture which was surprising. But with all this, at the latter place there was a power of God's presence, resulting in manifestations which would have shocked the dignity and propriety of Bath, and frightened many of the people into hysterics. Why did God save souls in the one place, and not in the other? Was it because there was faith and expectation in Cornwall (notwithstanding the gross ignorance), and no such expectation in Bath, with all its intelligence? The Lord Himself said, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John xi. 40). The Cornish people as a rule do not put the stone (of unbelief) on dead souls around them; therefore, the voice of the Son of God can and does reach many a Lazarus. The dead hear His voice, and live.

People remained at the meetings till a late hour at night, and then were at our lodgings the best part of the day. The believers came to inquire about the inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith, and sinners to ask how they might be brought from the power of Satan to God to receive forgiveness of their sins. (Acts xxvi. 18). I cannot describe what a joy it was to live and breathe again in a land of spiritual liberty. It was so good of the Lord to send us out for this refreshment. To those outside it might have looked like a very laborious holiday, to be employed talking, praying, and singing all day long, and a good part of the night too! But it was real rest of soul—rest in comparison with the dull and hard work in Bath. The rest of faith does not imply inactivity, but work; like the Christian Sabbath, which should abound in works of praise, worship, and usefulness for the Lord. Taking Christ's yoke, we find rest to our souls.

I was much struck on my return to Cornwall with the Cornish idea of conversion: not that it was new to me; but it had not come so forcibly to my mind in former times as now. I saw that their gospel was deficient; consequently their converts attained to *probation* rather than *salvation.* As if David's psalm had been written, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and charged me to take care how I walked, or He would cast me off*"—instead of, "He *established* my goings" (Ps. xl. 2). I could not get them to understand that we are not only saved, but kept, by the Lord Himself—not saved by Him, and kept by ourselves: that there are not two salvations, one present and depending on our faith, and the other final, depending upon our perseverance and faithfulness to grace. Our salvation is *eternal life*, and Christ is the Author, and also the Finisher of it.

The effort to correct this mistake, however gently and tenderly made, stirred the anger and suspicion of the Cornish mind, for the Wesleyan hates what he calls Calvinism. I found that if one mistake hindered spiritual vitality in Bath, another mistake in Cornwall hindered that vitality giving full honour to Christ. Albeit, truly converted and saved men here, as elsewhere, were raised above their system by the power of the Spirit, and the teaching of the Word.

We had many happy and exciting scenes during this visit. One Sunday morning when I was preaching I observed a gentleman with two or three fishermen standing together in the porch. The pulpit in those days was in the middle of the north wall. The church being crowded, and consequently very hot, the large south door was open, so that I could see them distinctly. In the course of my sermon I happened to say, "Some people do not know why they were sent into the world: they think it is a hard thing that they were born as sinners; harder still that they cannot help sinning; and hardest of all, that they are to be damned for sinning." I added, "There is not a word of truth in all this. Man was created perfect and upright; but he consented to sin, and fell, thus bringing sin and death into the world, though not without a previous warning. But God in His love and mercy has sent His Son; and with Him grace to save and help us, so that sin need not have dominion. Moreover, we are not to be damned for sinning; it is for refusing God's love. It is not written, 'He that sinneth shall be damned,' but, 'He that believeth not.' Our sins have moved God's compassion towards us, not His anger. When you love a person you are grieved at his fault; but if you do not love him, you are angry. 'God is Love.' He cannot help loving. He loves us, and also He loves His Son. If He so loved us as to give His Son for our salvation, He so loves His Son as to punish us if we neglect and despise that salvation. It is not true," I repeated, "that we are sent into this world as sinners; that we cannot help sinning; and that we are to be damned for sinning. It is an insulting libel against the Most High."

After the sermon, the gentleman from the porch came into the vestry trembling, and said, "Sir, how came you to say in your sermon, that some people made out that we came into the world as sinners; that we could not help sinning; and that we are to be damned for sinning? I uttered those very words in the hearing of some fishermen only half an hour before you uttered them from the pulpit."

I could see he was greatly agitated, and replied, "I have no doubt but God put these words into my mouth purposely for you. He does not very often warn people in such a remarkable manner. You had better take care what you are doing. Perhaps you have a praying mother, or a praying wife. I should advise you to kneel down at once and give your heart to God." He did this, and I prayed with him. After a time of silence he rose, and, thanking me, asked if I would call and see him the next day at his lodgings. I promised to do so.

Early in the morning, his wife came to say that her husband had been telegraphed for to London, and was obliged to go; but, she added, "I am sure he is changed since he heard your sermon yesterday. I do wish I had been with him and heard it too, for I have been anxious for a long, long time, and cannot find peace." I directed her to the finished work of Jesus, and it was not long before she came into liberty and realized the joy and peace of believing. Shortly after this other members of her family were brought to know the Lord, and to rejoice in Him as their Saviour. On their return to town they invited me to hold drawing-room and other meetings in their locality; and these assemblies were continued at frequent intervals for several years.

We had many remarkable conversions in that church, and some wonderful scenes. One more I will endeavour to describe.

At an afternoon service on a certain Sunday, there was a very large congregation, and the choir was in full force, almost filling the capacious gallery at the west end of the church. They had prepared a grand anthem for the occasion, which was taken from the twenty-sixth Psalm (Prayer-Book version). The striking parts were repeated over and over again, "I will wash, I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord; and so will I go to Thine altar. . . . My foot standeth right; I will praise the Lord, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, in the congregations." While this was in lively execution, the portly clerk stood still and firm as a rock in the front of the gallery, presenting a striking contrast to the band of numerous musicians behind him, who were in energetic action, arms and heads all going. There were upwards of a dozen violins, a bass fiddle, trombone, ophocleide, brass bassoon, and other instruments of music, besides a host of singers. This vigorous demonstration was quite exciting.

I could not help wishing that their feet did indeed stand aright, and that they had really washed their hands in innocency, and could praise God from their hearts. In the sermon, referring to this I said, that so many people lived and rejoiced as if they were safe; they came to the house of God, and praised Him in voice, as if no heart were required; and a great deal more to the same effect.

At the end of the sermon the choir scarcely joined in singing the psalm that I gave out, and while I was praying some of them began to cry to the Lord for mercy. I went up to the gallery as soon as I could, and oh, what a scene presented itself! The violins were lying about in all directions, and the various other instruments of music were laid aside, while the players were on their knees praying for mercy, the clerk himself being among the number. It was a glorious afternoon: there were people praying and rejoicing in the body of the church; and the gallery also was resounding with cries, first of distress, and then of praise. Many began from that day to praise the Lord in the congregation, with their feet standing on the Rock. The churchwarden, with others, was helping to lead the anxious ones to Jesus.

One evening as we were retiring from the schoolroom, having put out all the lamps and candles, we locked the door, and were fastening the outer gate, when some one said, "Why, you have left a candle burning!" "No," I answered, "that I am sure I did not." But true enough, there was a light for all that; so we went back to see, and well it was we did. We discovered that in coming out of the dark room we had moved a form which was standing in the way; and in doing this, one of its legs rubbing along the floor must have ignited a match lying there. This soon kindled the dry wood of the leg of the form, and the flame was quietly but surely making its way upwards. We watched its steady progress, and saw how this little fire might have ended in the total destruction of the place before morning, if we had not observed it. This incident showed us the superintending providence of God; and we thanked Him accordingly.

On another occasion, one moonlight evening, I went out to Lamorna Cove to preach in a large room at the mill, and a most wonderful Cornish evening we had! I was happy in preaching, and the people in hearing; "the shout of a King" was in the camp. The people rejoiced, and others cried aloud for mercy, which made the rejoicing ones happier still!

Late at night we broke up, and the people marched away, singing as they went. One party took the road on one side of the valley, and another the road on the other. The sound of their different hymns blending with the loud echoes of the deep long valley produced strange music. I could not help stopping in the moonlight to listen to the harmony. The waves of the sea dashing behind us, and the mingled songs of praise sounding amongst the hills before us, made a deep and lasting impression on my mind and memory.

One day I went to Mousehole, a fishing village about two miles from the church, to give an address to the sick and aged who could not come to the services. The room was all too small, and I had to stand in the open street opposite, and speak to those within the room and those without. Amongst others there came to the meeting a stout, heavy woman upon crutches. As the address went on, she was so excited in praising God, that she tossed her crutches into the air, and shrieked out, "I'm haled, I'm haled; I can walk, and leap too!" Leap she did, with a power that astonished me and every one else present. She rose from the ground at least as high as the table which was placed out in the road for me to stand upon. She exclaimed, "My soul is full: hallelujah!" and so it would appear were the souls of many others, if noise and outward demonstration were any proof.

Another time, preaching at Newlyn in the open air, there was so great a crowd assembled that I was obliged to climb up into a high fishing-smack which was stranded on the beach. There, standing on the deck, I let down the nets, and truly the Lord gave us a miraculous draught of fishes. It was indeed a day of joy and gladness. Oh for the liberty and triumph of the rough rams' horns; they beat the pretty silver trumpets into nothing! I was as a giant refreshed with new wine; and felt as if, like a Samson. I could pull the pillars of Bath down, and set some of the Philistines flying!

In this far-off West we had some Philistines also, who wrote to the Bishop (Philpott), to inform his lordship that I was preaching at Paul. Then came a letter in the well-known handwriting to the Vicar with "H. Exeter" in the corner. I need not say, I did not forward that document. The following week came another in the same handwriting, with the same veritable signature, and that I put up with the first in due form on the mantelpiece. In a few days another, and yet another, each of them more angry than the one before, at least I had no doubt it was so—and so it was! At last there were five letters all in a row waiting the Vicar's perusal by the time I left to return to Bath.

I had taken my departure several days before he returned. He saw his letters, and opened them one by one. Upon inquiry, he found that my sojourn in the parish had been blessed to many souls. The people were full of my visit—the choir almost without exception were converted—the schoolmaster changed—the churchwarden rejoicing—and the clerk also. The Vicar wrote to the Bishop at once to tell him all this, and said that if he had had his lordship's letters forwarded, he could not have dared to stop the work. He went on to say, that "the people were begging him to ask me to come again;" and he added, "unless, my lord, I have a good legal reason for not doing so, I feel it my duty to write and fix the time for another visit from Mr. Haslam."

After the lapse of a few months he did this, and invited me to come for a week for missionary and other meetings.

CHAPTER XV.

A Visit to Scotland.

1862.

DURING my visit to Cornwall, recorded in the last chapter, I received an invitation to go to Aberdeenshire—from the extreme West to the extreme North. It came from the late Earl of Kintore, whom I had met in Bath in the previous spring. It was my privilege to make his acquaintance under the following circumstances.

One day as the congregation was dispersing from my church in Avon Street, I observed a handsome couple on the pavement before me, whose appearance presented a great contrast to that of the people about. On nearing them, I overheard the gentleman say to the lady, "It is hurrah for sinners here: there is nothing for us!" "So it appears," was the lady's quiet reply. When I came up with them, I looked round, intending to make some remark; but before I could speak, the gentleman said, "Here" (handing me his card), "I understand you do not go out to dinner; come and lunch with me to-morrow." Accepting the card and the invitation with thanks, I went on to speak about the dreadful place, and the discouraging nature of the work in it, till we reached the end of the street; then we parted, as our paths lay in opposite directions.

On looking at the card I was surprised to see who my unknown companions were. Nothing terrified, however, I went the next day to their residence for luncheon, and had a most interesting time in prayer and thanksgiving with the Earl and Countess. The Lord there and then gave me these two to be my friends; and through many years their friendship has proved helpful and encouraging, as it has ever been steadfast and unwavering.*

These kind people invited me to their family seat in Scotland, and at the same time asked if I had any objection to preach in a Free Church. I answered that I was willing to preach anywhere,—in a church, school, hall, drawing-room, barn, or in the open air. Having accepted this call, I hastened back from Cornwall to Bath for a Sunday or two, and then set out early one Monday morning for the far North.

It may be asked, what became of my congregation during my absence. I made full provision for them as to the Sunday services; and beyond this there was little need. The majority of the poor people in the street followed the fashion, and left town. The beggars, like their betters, went to the sea-side and to watering-places; while others went out fruit and hop picking into Kent and Sussex until the middle or end of September: therefore there was little to do in my district.

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* I had the joy of seeing his lordship grow in grace, and expanding year by year in Christian happiness and usefulness. In the midst of his joyful career it pleased the Lord to take him home suddenly one Sunday evening. He is now for ever with the Lord; but his departure has made a terrible blank in his family, and among a large circle of friends.

Travelling night and day I reached my destination at Keith Hall on Tuesday afternoon. Having promised that I would preach the same day if required, the drummer was sent round on my arrival, to announce that a clergyman from England would speak in the open space, in front of the Town Hall, at five o'clock.

On coming to the place appointed, we were surprised to see a large concourse of people; and more so to find two Free Church Evangelists already addressing them. It appeared that these gentlemen happened to be passing through the town in the afternoon, and thinking that the announcement given was for them, they went down even before the time, and began their "exercises." I was pleased to witness the scene, and thankful to hear what was being so well and faithfully said. I was also not a little curious to see for myself how the Scotchmen conducted such services, for they were not common in those days; therefore I remained quiet and unknown till they had finished. Then my friend went forward and stated the case, to the dismay of the two Evangelists, saying, that the English clergyman for whom this meeting was convened was present, and would now address the meeting.

I did not detain the audience long; but merely gathered up the points of doctrine which had been well and firmly stated, and applied them experimentally. I saw clearly that these ministers were much better versed in Christian doctrines, and in ability to state them, than the great majority of our English clergy. They talked well, and evidently knew what they were speaking about. After I had finished, the Free Church minister of the place invited the people to his church at half-past seven o'clock the same evening, and announced that the three ministers, who had been addressing them, would there do so again.

At this service I asked the two Scotchmen to speak first, and leave time for me to follow. I was much edified by their matter and manner, and could not help saying so. By acknowledging the impression made on my own mind, I tried to impress the people with a sense of the eternal realities to which we had been listening. My friend having fixed upon the next day for a gathering of his tenants, I announced (with due permission) that I would speak again on Thursday and Friday evenings in that church.

The tenants' feast was held in a capacious barn, which was prepared and decorated for the occasion. When we had assembled, the tea and cakes hot and smoking, and other good things ready, the minister of the parish was called upon to say grace. He rose to do so: on and on he went, slowly and perseveringly, till ten minutes had passed by, and five more added to that; and yet there seemed to be no sign of termination, or the slightest indication of it. The people stood and bore the grace patiently as if they were accustomed to it. My friend whispered to me, "He will not stop till he gets to the angels and archangels." The "exercise" passed slowly on till it came, at last, to the welcome angels; then my friend looked at me, and true to his prediction, the long grace was over, and we sat down to cold cakes and colder tea.

This reverend minister was a Doctor of Divinity; and, as became a member of the Established Church, cool and self-possessed. He was, however, neither too old nor too indifferent to be touched by the subject of the Disruption. It was the one thing that ruffled his equanimity; he could not speak of it with patience. In the simplicity of my mind, I could not imagine why there should be such deep heart-burnings and jealousies amongst a people who had changed no doctrines or customs. The great Disruption was all about Church government and patronage. "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good." I cannot but think that this rupture must have been from God, for since that time there have been two ministers in a parish instead of one, both teaching pretty much the same truths and in the same way, two churches, and two schools. Besides this, a healthy emulation has been created (though it is sometimes a little angry), and sleepers have been awakened to redoubled energy.

The repast being finished, I rose and gave my address to the farmers and labourers. It was on the subject of the Gospel feast to which all are invited. It was a banquet, I said, worthy of the Great King, and most joyous to the guests. I was led to dwell upon two facts—the freeness of the invitation, and the happiness of the invited.

"You were on very tender ground," said my kind friend. "You know many of the Scotch people do not believe in that 'free invitation;' neither are they the 'joyous' people you would have them to be: their mirth is very solemn." However, in my innocence of these facts, such was the message.

After this I went round, making the acquaintance of some of the tenants and conversing with others. They seemed interested in hearing truths put, as they said, in "quite another way."

The Thursday and Friday evening services in the Free Church were well attended; an English clergyman was certainly a novelty, and they were not disappointed to hear that he was to preach twice "on Sabbath first." It seemed a gigantic labour to conduct these two services after the Presbyterian mode; I had never done such a thing in my life before, though I could not say I was unaccustomed to public speaking; but this was a great undertaking. I had to give out and read four psalms, to pray three times, and give two addresses. It was equal to a day's work at each "diet." The metrical psalms which they sing in Scotland were difficult to read, and needed practice to pronounce aright. The verses are supposed to rhyme; but the sense often goes on into the next line, requiring that the voice should be sustained in a way that our Southern hymns do not necessitate.

None of the dear people in the North ever imagined the perplexity I felt in mastering this difficulty, or how nervous and sleepless I was the night before, in the anticipation of it. Perhaps some of my English friends will sympathise with me if they try to read the following verses aloud, taken from Ps. xviii. (ver. 21, 22; 45, 46):—

"For I God's ways kept, from my God
Did not turn wickedly.
His judgments were before me, I
His laws put not from me." . . .

"Strangers for fear shall fade away,
Who in close places sit." . . .

"God lives, bless'd be my Rock: the God
Of my health praisèd be."

These lines are by no means the most difficult to be found in their translation, but from the mouth of a Scotchman they flow with the greatest ease and remarkable regularity.

I prayed to be sustained and guided through those services, and believe I was. During the exposition of Scripture the people listened very attentively. This was well and satisfactory; but while I was preaching, the same quiet attention was very perplexing to one who had just come from Cornwall. I felt as if I could not move them; they were altogether imperturbable. I was dismayed to find that my appeals fell flat and dead, again and again. The people looked as if their faces were of stone; they never moved a muscle, though their eyes were fixed upon the preacher.

When the sermon was concluded and the "intimations" of the English clergyman's services for the coming week were duly made, the psalm was sung by the people sitting, according to custom. They sit to sing, and stand to pray. The collection was "taken up;" the benediction pronounced; and the service ended. I was heartily thankful when it was over; for it appeared to be needlessly heavy throughout—to say nothing of the singing. As to the tunes, they were most mournful and complicated. When I expected the notes to go up they went down, and when I thought they would go down they went higher. Altogether it was to me anything but a joyous service.

On coming out, my friend, who was waiting at the door, took my arm, and said, "Well, you gave it to them very faithfully this morning." "Did I not give it to you also?" I asked. "Well, yes, there was a good word for us all."

Evidently, however, it had not hit him; nor did I feel I had reached any one. I was sorely discouraged by the apparent coolness of the congregation, and could not help speaking of it. "Oh," said my friend, "I have seldom seen the people so interested; you may be sure they took it in: we will talk to some of them as we go along." One elderly Scotch body whom we overtook in answer to inquiries, said, "I was dreedfu' pleased wi' yon English clergyman this mornin'." Others made similar remarks, which showed that I had not laboured altogether in vain.

In the afternoon the Free Church was fuller than in the morning. This time I thought I would test the congregation for myself. Referring to the morning sermon, I said, "A friend remarked to me 'You gave it to them faithfully!' I replied, 'And did I not give it to you also?'" There was a general smile—that was enough. I went on, feeling that the people were all attention, notwithstanding that they looked like so many stones set up in rows before me! In the evening I spoke at the schoolroom, and had an after-meeting, when souls were gathered. Every night during the week I preached somewhere.

On the Saturday we drove to a place where a new granite quarry had recently been opened. There I endeavoured to speak, but it was under difficulties, caused by a disturbance among the men. Some would hear, and some would not; and there was every prospect of a fight. Rather than have this I drew to a speedy conclusion, telling them that I would preach the next day at the Free Church. A large gang of these quarrymen walked down to the service, and five of them remained behind to be spoken with. One of these was in such distress of soul that we took him home with us to Keith Hall, by "the plank," which was a short way over the river.

He kept on saying, "I can't belave."

"Can't believe whom? Cannot you believe God?"

"Oh yes, I always belave Him."

"Can't believe what? Cannot you believe that Christ died for you?"

"No, I cannot."

"Can you believe that He left you out when He died for all—all except Alex"——

"No, I can't belave that."

"Then what will you believe?"

"That is just what I don't know."

However, in due time he found peace, and began to rejoice. He said, "I have often been in *the* Lord's House, but never before in *a* lord's house. And to think I was born again in such a place as this!"

This dear man, his wife, and a few others formed the nucleus of a new church in their village, which is now in a flourishing condition. The infancy of this community was sorely hindered and vexed by the usual opposition of the ungodly; but most of all, by the goodness of a respectable and moral man, John D——, who was pointed at as an example of excellence. He was not a converted man, and the people used to say, "If your converts are half as good as he, we will believe you!" The said John himself was very sarcastic about conversions and converted people, and declared he could not trust them. In return for this, some of the despised converts prayed for him, and continued in supplication, until at last John was awakened to see himself (as he declared) to be the greatest sinner in the quarry. He came into great distress of soul, and begged the prayers of those he had formerly opposed. He eventually found peace, and became a valiant soldier for Christ, and a great help in the place. Year by year, as I subsequently visited the North, I was thankful to see how this little church increased in stability and numbers.

I may say that, coming from the South, I was surprised to find so much Bible-knowledge, especially among the working classes. Their intelligent acquaintance with Christian doctrines also surprised me, though not so much when I saw in the little shop windows the children's lesson-book, with the "A, B, C" on one page, and a short Catechism on the opposite side. I believe that this early planting or teaching of God's truth, coupled with the daily reading of the Bible, is the secret of Scotch stability and influence. Even in secular matters, it helps to form that steadfast and indomitable character which distinguishes this people from the English* the world over, and still more from the Irish.

In the course of one of my sermons in the Free Church, I happened to make a Scripture reference, naming chapter and verse. In an instant hundreds of hands were stretched out to take up their Bibles. The rustling of leaves was so great that I had to wait till the text was found. This made a break in my speaking which I did not care for, so I gave no more references with particularity. In exposition and teaching, it may be better to prove the statements as you go on, by referring to chapter and verse; but when speaking from heart to heart, these interruptions are a hindrance; at least I found it to be so.

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* In some country parishes in England, I have found it hopeless to allude to Scripture characters. I remember one day speaking of Joseph at a cottage meeting, taking it for granted that every one knew who I meant. A poor woman came forward afterwards with tears in her eyes, to ask whether I could tell her Joseph's other name, and what prison he was in, for that "her poor boy Joseph was in prison!"

I strongly commend familiar knowledge of the Bible, and accurate acquaintance with Scripture truth, even though it be only mental. I find that when people are converted who have no such acquaintance with the Word, and the examples and precepts therein given, they are compelled to fall back on their own feelings. Consequently, they are too frequently tossed hither and thither by feelings; whereas, those who know the *Word* are confirmed and established in the *work* of the Spirit which they have experienced, and are able to set to their seal that God is true.

At the Town Hall meetings we had many cases of conversion. Amongst them was that of an intelligent young man, who had long been in an inquiring and anxious state. The first time he heard me speak, he determined to put away "everything," and to follow on till he obtained what he desired.

It was not long before he was saved, for the ground of his heart had been prepared by the Spirit, and the seed of the Word having been sown there in early life, it sprang up quickly, and brought forth fruit to the glory of God. He, with another convert, was the founder of a "Young Men's Christian Association" in the place.

This visit to Scotland was a blessing to many, besides being a great benefit and enlargement to my own soul. A Mothers' Meeting, in which Lady Kintore was interested, greatly increased, and some living souls were added. In the household at Keith Hall the Lord also gave much blessing.

Amongst others, I may here mention the coachman. This man had a praying mother, who used to speak to him occasionally about his soul. He would not endure this; he therefore determined to leave home, and go into service with worldly people, that he might hear no more on the subject. But it was not to be; for in the first situation he took, there happened to be an invalid lady upon whom he attended. She spoke to him about his eternal interests, asking various questions—if he had a praying mother? whether he ever prayed? if so, what he prayed for? and whether he expected answers?

This was altogether too hot for him, so he left and went to a new place, where there was "no such thing as religion." From thence he went to another, and yet another, till at last, by way of promotion, he found himself the coachman at Keith Hall. Here he thought he should "do very well, and get on comfortably." He did so, till his lordship returned from Bath full of zeal for souls. Again the coachman's nest was disturbed, and he reluctantly decided to go from this situation also. He made up his mind to give notice on a particular Monday. It so happened that before that day arrived I had come to the house. The English clergyman attracted his attention, and on Sabbath, while I was reading in church "One shall be taken and another left," he said to himself, "That's me; my brother is saved, and I'm left to be lost!" He was brought into much anxiety; he thought every word in the sermon was for him; the prayer also touched his case, as if I knew all about it.

When the Monday arrived, on which day he had intended to give notice, it found him telling me his story with tears of joy and thankfulness. "My dear old mother's prayers are answered in spite of me," he exclaimed. This man came out a bright and happy witness for the truth as it is in Jesus.

Through the kindness of my friends I was introduced to many of the great and good in the North. I went to the Huntly gathering, convened by the Duchess of Gordon, to Lord Aberdeen's at Haddo House, to Mr. Brownlow North's at Elgin, and to various other meetings in Aberdeenshire, Perth, and Edinburgh.

In the last-mentioned city, at the Carrubbers Close Mission, there had been a revival going on for two years. Here, in the old chapel in which Whitefield preached, I had the opportunity of declaring the glad tidings of the Gospel to a people prepared to receive the truth. On the following

Sabbath the Free Assembly Hall was filled to excess, and I rejoiced much to see the work of the Lord prospering somewhat after the Cornish style.

After three weeks I returned home, refreshed and strengthened for my future work.

CHAPTER XVI.

Street-Preaching.

1863.

AMONG my lady helpers in Avon Street was Miss Geraldine Hooper, of whom I shall have more to tell hereafter. She was indeed eminently useful to me. The cheerful readiness with which she acceded to my wishes, and the wonderful ability and success with which she accomplished what she undertook, were truly astonishing. If she conducted the Temperance meeting (though at that time she had not commenced giving addresses), by her winning way she obtained more pledges than any one else. If she took a Bible class it was crowded; if she held a prayer-meeting, even in the early morning, it was sure to be full.

She was a great favourite in the street—universally and deservedly esteemed. In short, her will was law; and a very pleasant law it seemed to be, for the people rejoiced to do her bidding, and she exercised her authority in a cheerful and cheering manner.

When there was to be a service in the church, it was amusing to see her coming down the street, beckoning and summoning people to attend, and then waving on with her hands the little crowd before her, adding to them as she passed along till they arrived at the church door. Here she took her stand, and bade the people go in and sit down; then she went to the lower end of the street to bring others in the same way. In the church she would play the organ if required, lead the singing, keep children in order, or what was more difficult still, at least to most people, constrain a drunken man or woman to be quiet and orderly, if any such had strayed into the congregation.

In our street-preaching her help was most valuable, for she not only swept up the people from all sides to the appointed place, but moved about among them to ensure order, or to encourage them to sing.

These open-air services I made as attractive as I could, by reference to familiar objects. One day I referred to the fountain at the head of the street, and spoke of the ever-flowing water, without which, people were obliged to drink beer and spirits; as those who neglect the fountain still continue to do. So, in like manner, I said, till the people hear God's Word, they are obliged to do the best they can with men's inventions, and consequently wander farther and farther from the truth, till they perish.

Another time when I preached, there was a long ladder in the street standing up against one of the houses. Pointing to it I asked, "How can I climb that ladder? There is only one way to do so, as there is but one way to heaven, that is by putting yourself on it, and letting it carry you! Many people try various other ways, but in vain. Suppose you were to try, as you call it, to climb the ladder by putting one hand to it while you still remained standing on the ground, would that do?" "No, no." "Suppose then, you were to put two hands?" "No." "Suppose you put one foot, or even both feet on to it, while you are clinging with your hands to something on the ground?" "No, no, that ain't the way, you must put both hands, and both feet on it of course." "Exactly; that is the way to be a real Christian. It is of little use coming to a service now and then; that is like putting one hand on the ladder: or even attending regularly; that is like standing with both feet on it, making a profession of Christianity, while you are with both hands clutching after this world. You must give your heart and yourself right up to the Lord, and that for ever; then you will see how He can bear you. He will carry you higher and higher, and thus take you farther away from the troubles and temptations that keep you here below, like prisoners doomed to be executed."

A fashionable lady, who happened to be passing at the time, heard some of this lecture or object lesson about the ladder, and was greatly disgusted that "a clergyman of the Church of England should be preaching in the gutter; he ought to have his gown stripped off his back," and so on. She made no secret of her objections to the obnoxious individual in question.*

My young friend Miss Hooper suggested that I should take the public-house signs as texts for future addresses. I said I would, and accordingly gave notice the following Sunday, that on a given day I would preach in front of "The Garibaldi" public-house; I added that week by week I proposed going down the street, taking the well-known signs of the various public-houses in order, as subjects for open-air addresses.

On the day appointed a large crowd assembled at the place named, and we began our meeting as usual with singing. Some of the customers came out from the public-house to see what was going on, and among others the publican himself. When he heard what we were going to do, namely, to speak upon the sign "Garibaldi," he determined to oppose us. For this purpose he brought out a large bell which he rang with all his might. I continued speaking notwithstanding, raising my voice to a higher pitch. This combination of sounds attracted more people. My imperturbable young friend went up to the energetic publican, and thanked him "for his good services," and begged him "not to hurt himself."

Finding his efforts in this direction were unsuccessful, he went into the house again; he presently appeared at an upper window, from which he sprang a loud rattle. This he plied vigorously till he was red in the face. Miss

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* A few years afterwards, I met this lady in London; but she was so changed in her outward appearance that I scarcely recognized her. It was difficult to believe that she was the same person as the votary of worldliness and fashion I had seen in Bath. To my further surprise she came up and offered to shake hands with me. She said, "Do you remember once preaching in Avon Street about a ladder? I never could escape from the words I then heard. I felt that I was the person standing on the ground with one hand only on the ladder. Thank God, the ladder carries me now! How I hated you! You must never mind such things, or be discouraged by them. I am quite sure that my scorn did you less harm at that time than my praises would have done!"

Hooper called to him, and said, "Thank you: you are as good as a church bell; the people are flocking to the meeting." Some in the crowd laughed at the poor man, and one called out, "Hold on, maister, don't go to hurt yourself;" upon which he desisted, and soon after retired, shutting the window after him.

I took pains to tell my audience about the poor degraded people in Italy. I showed how they were misgoverned and kept in a state of ignorance and superstition under the sovereignty of the Pope. Then I spoke of how Garibaldi arose, and pointed out to them the advantages of freedom, at the same time urging them to claim their liberty. Next, I showed how he succeeded in delivering the people from their bondage. "The name of this great man," I continued, "and his portrait up there with the red shirt, is a mistake on a house like that. Not that it is by any means the worst one in the place; but such a sign for a drinking-house, where the poor drunkard's chains are riveted upon him, and he is made a slave of the worst kind, both for time and eternity, is most unsuitable, and a great abuse of terms."

I told them that in passing by that open window the other day I heard a drunken party singing, or rather making an attempt to sing, "Britons never shall be slaves!" I could not help thinking that it was like the lying devil himself singing and mocking them. Why, what else were they at that very moment but slaves, and that of the most degraded kind? I then invited the people to something better. "Come," I said, "to this happy lady's Temperance meeting to-night. Who will come? Hold up your hands." I need not add that Miss Hooper had a large increase in the attendance at her service that evening.

There is not room to tell of all the public-house signs I discoursed upon, but I will mention two more. The policemen wondered that we were not mobbed and pelted. One said, "It shows you have had some effect on the people, or I don't know what would have happened."

The next sign I took was that of "The Lamb." When we had all assembled, and expectation was at its height (a large crowd being present), I directed them to look at the dull, stupid-looking lamb, that was painted on the sign-board. "The fact is," I said, "that creature is not so dull or so stupid and harmless as it looks. If you read it aright, it is a very wolf in sheep's clothing—a ravening wolf which has destroyed much good, and done immense harm to men, women, and children. It has robbed numerous houses of joy, cheer, and all comfort, and has brought desolation and misery to them instead."

"Only the other day," I continued, "I saw two women fighting outside this house, and was told not to interfere with them; they had had a quarrel inside, and 'must fight it out.' It was an awful sight to see them scratching and beating one another, and pulling each other's hair. One even tried to bite the other—don't laugh!—they were screeching and swearing at one another, besides being covered with blood. It was indeed a sickening sight. It is bad enough when men fight, but far worse when women do so. Think of all the quarrels in this and similar houses; think of the angry passions that are stirred by the muddling drink! Why, it is an insult to the very animal represented on the sign-board, to give such a name to such a place!"

Another day we stood opposite "The Shamrock." This sign had perplexed me for some time, as I could not think of a suitable explanation. At last a happy thought brought one to my mind. Being the national emblem for Ireland, we especially invited the Irish neighbours to attend, which they did in considerable numbers. I remarked, that the Shamrock was St. Patrick's emblem of the Trinity. Once when he was preaching the Gospel in the open-air, he held up the little trefoil, as a symbol of the Three in One, and the One in Three. I took the opportunity also of saying that this Saint was a good Protestant, and no mistake. He was a really converted man, and knew nothing about the practices and ceremonies which the Roman Catholic Church has invented since his time.

It taxed my friend Miss Hooper's influence to the full to keep the Hibernians quiet. She bade them "Be aisy; he's not come to the best part of his subject yet." On the plea of keeping the best till last, I went on to say that there was something more to tell about the Shamrock. There are multitudes of people who get dejected and troubled, both about this world and the next; and if they do not know the way of salvation, and do not understand how to speak to the Saviour Himself in their troubles, there is no comfort for them. If they do not know how to flee to the Rock, the real, true Rock, Christ Jesus, they are sure to go to something else. They make resolutions, or go to the priest, or seek help from the Virgin Mary.

These are the more steady ones, but others—and they are far too numerous—take refuge from their troubles in the drink. This is a very common practice; they take to the beer-barrel or the public-house in order to drown their misery. This is a false refuge; it is what I call the *sham* rock, which does no good, but rather drags people into deeper evil. There is nothing like going to the Rock of Ages. The Lord says, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I WILL DELIVER THEE (mark that); and thou shalt glorify Me!" (Ps. l. 15). It is a poor plan to go to a sham, when you can go to the real thing; and this *sham* rock, I said, pointing to the house, like other drinking places, has quenched many a striving of the Spirit of God, which might otherwise have led to good.

The audience was very silent and attentive; so I was enabled to urge my plea, and beg of them for their own sakes, and that of their wives and children, to take to prayer, and avoid all intoxicating stuff. This day's work was more effective than that on any previous occasion, and I believe the word spoken touched many a heart. Miss Hooper had a grand meeting that evening, and large results in the way of pledges.

In these open-air gatherings I found that we got hold of people who could not be reached by other means; therefore I made use of their instrumentality as much as I could, and never lost a chance of securing the services of likely speakers. Of these I will mention two—both remarkable characters. The former I will call "Simon," and the latter "The Sea-dog."

One evening while on a visit to some friends at Bristol, I was walking near the Cathedral, regarding its ruined nave (since restored); when one of my old Cornish parishioners caught sight of me. He said he could scarcely believe his eyes to see me there; what increased his surprise, was to find that I was idle that evening. "What, maister!" he said, "not praching to-night?"

"No," I replied, "I have no place, or pulpit."

"Oh, bless yer, I'll soon find yer a place if yer'll prach."

When I assented, he said, "But will yer? Then come along with me to the Bethel." Presently as if another thought had struck him, he added, "No, you walk slowly on over the bridge and turn to yer right upon the quay, and then go on till I stop yer."

So saying, he ran forward, inviting passers-by as he went along, and hailing the crews of different ships which were moored alongside the quay. He then proceeded to hoist the Bethel flag, and to have the bell sounded.

This done, he went from ship to ship, calling out to the sailors to come and hear "a Cornish parson." By the time I reached the Bethel there was a considerable stir amongst the people.

I went on board, and found that this old ship, which had formerly been a man-of-war, was now converted into a messenger of mercy and peace. Between decks she was fitted up as a place of worship, with comfortable seats, which I was happy to see were fast filling with sailors. It was not long before I gave out a hymn, and we began to sing. This attracted others, till the place was very full.

After a short prayer I turned to Luke v., and read a few verses. I then went on to say, the Lord went into a ship, which was Simon's. At this there was an universal smile, and one man laughed aloud. I stopped to ask, "What is the joke?" The man replied, "Why, this is the very place; the missionary's name is Simon," pointing to a sturdy-looking man who was standing near me.

"That's all right," said this individual. "Go on."

I did so, and told them that "the Good Master spoke to the people on the shore, because He had no Bethel ship to invite them to. We are not told what He said on that occasion; but He always spoke with authority, and not as the Scribes, that is, He expected people to do what He told them. He did not go about to preach, but to save souls." I should say we had many Cornish friends in our company, and they did not allow me to go on without frequent ejaculations. It promised to be a lively scene. I continued, saying, that "after the Lord had done speaking, He commanded Simon to launch out into the deep, and let down his nets for a draught; and sure enough, there was a great catch. It is for this purpose that we preach the Gospel, or good news of salvation—in order to get the sailors saved. We read that the net brake, and no doubt some of the fishes made their escape.' Addressing my hearers, I said: "Some of you may get away too if you like; but mark, if you do, it will only be to go farther into the devil's power. You had far better stay in the Gospel net, and be drawn to the feet of Jesus."

After my address we commenced a prayer-meeting, and while men were praying one after another, we went among the kneeling ones. We found several in tears; and many strong men bowed down, who soon began to "give tongue," as friend Simon advised them to do. "I don't think," he added, "you will frighten this minister, by the looks of him!" Accordingly, one and another "gave tongue." It was a Bethel indeed, and we were there till after ten o'clock, praying and rejoicing. It was half-past ten before I returned to my friend's house. The family were beginning to fear I had gone home, notwithstanding my promise to stay for the night.

After this, I addressed the sailors several times in that lively ship, and never without blessing, for which I thanked God. In return for my visits, I invited friend Simon to come to Bath, and help me in Avon Street. He was just the man we wanted, having a powerful voice and fearless manner. Sometimes his harsh tone rather stirred up the opposition of his hearers, but with his ready wit he coolly and promptly overcame it.

One day, when he was raging against the drink, he said, "I know what I am speaking about. I am the son of a drunken father; I remember the time when I was a poor ragged boy, with a hungry belly (pointing at some miserably ragged and old-looking children who were standing before him). Yes, I know all about that; I remember how my poor mother used to cry. Dear me, how we dreaded father's coming home at night and thrashing us all; and mother too, for crying. The poor mice even went about with tears in their eyes, because they could find no crumbs in our cupboard."

With these recollections he became very excited and indignant, vehemently stamping the table on which he stood. His anger only kindled anger; it was not persuasive, though it was rousing.

At last a half-tipsy Irishman came forward and said, "I say, maister, didn't yer prach 'Love yer enemies'?"

"Yes, I did," said Simon.

"And didn't yer say that whisky was my enemy? (Loud cheers.) Then I loves my enemy; that I do."

"So do I!" "So do I!" said many voices.

Simon was put to it for once, as he afterwards owned; but he added, scratching his ear, "Somehow, yer know, I always finds that when a man throws a pebble at me, the Lord gives me a brickbat for he; so I up and said, 'But when did I tell yer to swallow yer enemies?'"

This man's utterances, however, were not always of a pugnacious character. He used to say that he liked to put in the plough pretty deep, before he sowed; the seed and then get a shower of blessing on it with prayer. His ultimate aim was to bring souls to Christ; and in this, God greatly owned and blessed his efforts.

My other visitor, "The Sea-dog," was a character also, though of another kind. He was as quiet as Simon was noisy; but for all that, quite as invincible. I first met him in the neighbourhood of Bristol, at a place called Pill. There I hired him to row me out to one of the ships anchored in the Roads. As we were going slowly against the tide, I began a conversation with him, by saying, "I do not see any church in your village."

"No," he answered, in an off-hand way, "we ain't got no church."

"Have you a chapel, then?" I continued.

"No! nor chapel neither."

"What then! do you get no preaching?"

"No, we have none o' that. I'll tell you what, we're a set of sea-dogs, we are. We don't want no preaching. A man did come once, and we got hold on him, and brought him to the water's edge to duck him; but he promised, that if we'd let him go he would never come any more. Oh no; we're a set of sea-dogs, that's what we are!"

"Pray, what is a sea-dog? I should like to know. Is it something better than a Christian?"

"Why, yes, I should think so, a deal; Christians are a set of hypocrites, a bad lot they are—don't b'lieve in 'em at all."

"I am a Christian," I added; "but you have not told me what a sea-dog is!"

As we continued our conversation, I was surprised to find how much this man knew, and could not help telling him so. I had my suspicions about him; but as we were nearing some big ships my attention was directed to them, so I ceased talking. One was English, another French, another American, and others Norwegian. Each had their different ensigns flying; but I noticed that all had a little white and red flag besides, in some part of the rigging. I asked my boatman the meaning of this. "Ah," he said, "that is the pilot's flag—when a pilot has charge of a vessel he puts up his flag somewhere. Pilots take the vessels up the river; otherwise they would have no insurance."

"Exactly," I replied, "the pilot has command of the vessel, and he is the captain of the captain himself, and has charge of the crew, ship, cargo, and all." With these thoughts I became very happy and said, "I have a Pilot too; His colours are white and red, and He is my insurance as well!" The idea burst upon me all at once, and in the fulness of my heart I went on to say, that it was "impossible for a converted man to get on without such a guide. We are not strong enough of ourselves to stand; and even if we were, Satan could easily push us down. We need the living Christ to sustain us—the Great Jehovah to guide and hold us with His powerful hand."

By this time the boatman was in tears, which he wiped away every now and then with his shirt sleeve. Noticing this, I said, "Are you a backslider?"

"Yes," he answered, "you're right."

"I thought you were. Now, never rest till you have the Pilot."

We prayed together there and then in the boat, and afterwards in his house. In the character of the Pilot, this man saw, as he afterwards told me, the very thing he needed. He said, "For the want of Him I went ashore, and stuck in the mud, and have made sad shipwreck of my faith. Now, thank the Lord, I have a Pilot aboard, and am not ashamed to show His colours."

Soon after this he came out as a preacher of the Gospel, rousing up the neighbourhood. On one occasion when he was holding forth under a tree, and telling his experience to a crowd assembled before him, the young Vicar of the parish rode up, and told him to desist, at the same time bidding the people not to mind such a man as that! In his zeal he went on to say, that "he did not believe in this sudden religion. His religion began in the cradle, and would go on to the grave." "Very odd," said the preacher; "that's just where my sins began, and they will go on to the grave." The people laughed at this, and the Vicar, finding he had no influence, rode away.

I invited the "Sea-dog" to come and preach in Avon Street, where he told us this, and many other stories. He put the Gospel before the people with great power. In doing so he seldom failed to urge them to give up the drink, for he said, "That is one of the greatest hindrances to salvation. It is the devil's drag-net, to draw men to hell in spite of themselves and their better feelings. Give up the drink," he cried with a piercing voice, "and call upon the Lord for salvation."

Pointing to one in the crowd he said, "There, look at that creature who has been trying to disturb me, and hinder the meeting. He does not look like a man at all. Why, see he can scarcely stand, poor slave of the devil and drink, that he is! How shall you escape the drunkard's hell? God have mercy upon you!" The poor man was so overpowered by this appeal that he screamed out in his terror, and then burst out in prayer, in which we joined on his behalf and that of others like him.

This "Sea-dog" was possessed of remarkable power, and generally concluded his appeals by fixing on some one individual, upon whom he poured out the biting application of his address, till the person at length yielded. He used to say that he probed about till the Lord showed him the particular individual who was to have the harpoon.

On such occasions, besides those who listened in the streets, there were several people at each of the many windows in the opposite houses. "O mother!" he said, looking up at an elderly woman at one of them, "there is salvation for you, and heaven for you, if you'll have it." Then he pleaded with her not to cast herself into hell! "Come down here; come, and we'll pray for you." He paused—"Will you?" he asked.

"Yes, yes; I will, I will," she screamed; and come she did, and others with her. There were striking scenes of one kind and another whenever our friend visited us, and results which will only be fully known in Eternity.

We were now getting into full work in the street, and my dear wife and Miss Hooper were beginning to speak in various places, when my sojourn here, as at Hayle, came unexpectedly to a close. I had laboured and worked with a perseverance which surprises me even to this day. It would surprise me even more, if I did not know that it was not my perseverance, but the Lord's, who kept me at it.

CHAPTER XVII.

Removal to Norfolk.

1863.

WHILE the work in Avon Street was taking this definite form, and making its best progress, it pleased God to send us domestic trials. We had seven members of our family ill with scarlet fever, one of whom died.*

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* He was only four years old, and suffered but very slightly from the fever. One day he was permitted to get up and play in the nursery. He was happy, but somewhat restless, and kept asking for fresh flowers. These were procured for him, but though they were fresh and bright he was not satisfied. Then he begged to be allowed to wear his white summer coat; this wish was gratified, but still he was not at rest. He asked his friend Miss Hooper to sing hymns to him, and sitting down

It was a time of sorrow, and suspense also, on account of the other children. The air of Bath had never suited my dear wife; and this affliction, together with the fatigue of nursing, brought her to the conclusion that for her sake, and that of the family, we should ask the Lord to remove us to some other place. I was rather taken aback; but looking at the matter on all sides, I determined that if she asked me again I would do so.

She did ask; and accordingly we knelt down and prayed the Lord to move us. On the morning of the second day after doing this, there came a letter from Sir Thomas Beauchamp, offering me a Rectory in Norfolk. Taking this as the Lord's answer to our prayer, we thanked Him, and accepted it.

Then Sir Thomas wrote to tell me that as soon as the living became vacant he had a wish to give it to me; but fearing it might be his own will, and not God's, he restrained himself. After waiting for four weeks (notwithstanding very numerous applications), Lady Beauchamp said one morning, "Why do you not give Buckenham to Mr. Haslam?" This was the very sign he had been waiting for. He replied, "I will do so to-day."

Thus it happened that the very day we were praying at Bath, God, through Sir Thomas and Lady Beauchamp, was answering in Norfolk.

In this letter Sir Thomas went on to say that the living was worth three hundred a year, with good house and glebe, and that the population was about twenty people. Also, that there was another Rectory attached to it, that of Hassingham, containing eighteen or twenty cottages.

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in his white coat and among his flowers, he looked up into her face and said, "Doi'ee" (that was his way for saying Georgy) "is very ill, and getting worse." He repeated this two or three times in the course of the afternoon. The doctor was sent for, but was detained till the evening, when it was evident that dear little "Doi'ee" was passing away. His friend asked if he loved Jesus? "Oh yes," he replied, "Jesus love me, and died for me: Doi'ee do love Jesus. Mamma, do not cry; Doi'ee is going to be with Jesus." Soon after he pointed upwards with his little hand, and looked steadfastly as if he saw the Lord. Thus his spirit passed away, leaving a happy expression on his face. Now his longing for the bright flowers and white coat was understood, and the cause of his restlessness explained.

Our hearts sank at this announcement; for God knew that it was not for a pleasant house or money * that we prayed, but for another sphere of work for Him.

However, here was the answer to prayer, and we had accepted it "for better for worse." Our reading the same morning was in the eighth chapter of the Acts, where we came upon the words, "Arise, and go unto Gaza, which is desert." I looked up, and found my wife looking at me. Our eyes met, evidently the words had had the same effect on both of us; and from this time we had no more doubts about the matter. I did not even care to go and see the place, for I was sure it would be good and well, and that in some way or other we should have work for the Master. But for business purposes it was necessary that I should make the journey, in order to arrange for the services of the parishes, till I could take possession in person.

Sir Thomas received me at Langley Hall most kindly, and the next morning drove me over to my new parish. We crossed the river in a ferry-boat, horses, carriage, and all. Then we passed along an avenue of trees with deep ditches on either side, and beautiful green pastures with much cattle upon them. These, I was told, were "the marshes."

"Marshes!" I cried, "why, I have been quietly making

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* I had abundantly proved that God was not unmindful of my domestic circumstances, for my stipend was only one hundred and twenty pounds a year, and though this amount had sufficed in Cornwall with a house rent free, it was manifestly not enough to live upon in Bath, with rent and taxes to pay. I had a wife, ten children, and two servants dependent on me; but I was dependent upon the Lord, and He did not fail me. Unsought for, a friend wrote to ask me to put two of my sons on the foundation of his grammar school. Another, a lady, the daughter of a Lord Chancellor, bade me send my daughter to a school at her expense. A gentleman, who had a nomination to Christ's Hospital, gave me that for another of my sons. My house rent was regularly paid by some unknown benefactor. A butcher's boy came twice a week to the door with a joint of meat. A tailor called in occasionally to measure me for a greatcoat or other clothes. Indeed, we never wanted. I have already told how our trip to Freshford was provided for; and in addition to all this, a Christian physician attended us for nothing, and said he was "our debtor." It was like carrying an empty purse, but always finding money convenient according to the need. "In some way or other the Lord *did* provide."

up my mind for swamps and all their attendant evils; these look like beautiful fields."

"So they are," said my friend, "and very rich fields too."

Next we passed through a railway station, and ascended a hill, at the top of which I observed a gravel pit. "Look, this is a dry gravel soil," said Sir Thomas. Dry soil, railway station, and green pastures, when I feared a damp flat place buried up in the country. My heart was rising more and more in surprise and thankfulness.

My friend was driving me to the Rectory house; but I begged him to take me to the church first. In order to do this he had to call upon the churchwarden for the keys. We knocked at his door, when his old housekeeper appeared at the window and said, that "the master had gone out, and taken the key of the front door with him;" so she could not admit us except at the back.

Sir Thomas said, "Let me introduce the new Rector to you."

"Oh," she replied, turning her face away, "I don't want to see him. I thought Mr. C—— was to have the living: It will be a great disappointment to him, and indeed to us all." This was my first welcome to Buckenham.

We obtained the keys through the said window, and proceeded at once to the sacred edifice. It was a Norman church, with an octagon tower; the interior was fitted up with oak benches and rich stained glass. Here my patron kindly knelt with me in prayer, and was good enough to thank God for inclining me to accept this charge.

From this we went to the Rectory, which we could scarcely see for trees. I said that in Cornwall I built a house in a bare place, and planted thousands of young trees; here God has given me a better house, and trees grown up.

"You will have to cut a great many down," added Sir Thomas. And so it was: the house was dark and damp for want of light and ventilation; but it was a gem of a place. It had been built at different times after the model of a chateau in Normandy, with a verandah all round. I could scarcely believe that this place was for me; and felt deeply thankful. The garden used to be kept in perfect order; but not having been tended this summer, it was overrun with weeds. They were growing in a luxuriant manner, as if making the most of their unexpected chance—a warning and a lesson in themselves!

From this we drove through a beautiful lane to Hassingham Church, which was even prettier than that at Buckenham. It had a thatched roof, and round tower, surmounted with an octagon belfry. The inside was beautifully finished, with oak carvings, stained glass windows, and encaustic tiles. Here again, with thanksgiving, we made prayer for God's blessing.

I said, "The Lord has not forgotten my work and labour of love. I built one church; and He has given me two, more beautiful than the one I gave up to Him when with many tears I left Baldhu * eight years ago." I was in a hurry to go home to my family, and tell of all the good things the Lord had provided for us.

Having completed the necessary arrangements for the parish till September, I returned to Bath to make the most of the three months that remained.

Our open-air services, Temperance meetings, Prayer-meetings, Bible-readings, Mothers' meetings, and Schools were all in good working order, and so well sustained by those who were responsible for them, that my successor would not have much trouble in keeping them on; unless, like some successors, he determined to re-organise everything and overthrow all previous arrangements.

During this period I was invited by Sir Thomas and Lady Beauchamp to London, that I might attend the Barnet Conference. I had been living so far out of the world as not to have heard there was such an annual gathering, but was told I "must come to it."

Accordingly I went; and certainly it was a heavenly gathering, and Rev. William Pennefather, the convener and president of it, a heavenly man. Hitherto all my comparisons had been made in favour of Cornwall; but I must confess that I had never felt the power of God's presence more uniformly pervading a place than here. There was no noise or demonstrative excitement, and yet there was a

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* See "FROM DEATH INTO LIFE," chap. xxxv.

melting and stirring of soul which entranced me. I began to think that there was something in the world as good as Cornwall after all!

Mr. Pennefather was the personification of Christian love, and those who assembled in his presence could not help being drawn out and bound together under such a leader. His prayers united us; and his invitations to praise (often in hymns of his own composing) lifted our souls above the world into regions of joy far beyond.

At the close of the day I felt that I had never spent such a happy time of spiritual communion before.

The meeting the next morning was as charming as the preceding one, at least in its beginning. To my surprise, towards its close, I was called upon by name to come to the platform, and say a few words at the conclusion of the hymn which was then given out.

This for the moment terrified me, for I had no time to prepare; but commending myself to Him who alone could direct me aright, I joined in the hymn, and after that commenced my address. I did not begin with an apology, although I felt very small in that great assembly, and trembled with agitation. The subject of the day was "The Presence and Glory of the Word Incarnate as unfolded by the Holy Ghost." The Lord brought vividly to my mind the vision as recorded in the first chapter of the Revelation. There I saw St. John the aged, dejected and lowly, at Patmos, mourning not so much for himself, as for the sorrow of his spiritual children in Ephesus, dismayed and perplexed that the heathen were permitted to persecute them. I imagined him sitting in loneliness, looking out over the rocks at the blue sea in desponding meditation, and wondering at this inscrutable dispensation. Suddenly he heard a voice behind him (under such circumstances God's voice is ever behind us, for we are looking the wrong way when we are looking at the darkness). The voice he heard said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." When he turned round he saw the Lord, in His risen priestly character and dress, tending the seven golden candlesticks. His own Church in Ephesus was the very first of them, not forsaken or given over, but being nourished and fed. At the wondrous sight he fell down as one dead, but was raised up and made to look upon the scene, and to receive the Lord's message to the churches, together with the transcendent revelation of things to come. Thus the Apostle was assured that Christ is the unchangeable One, and is always present, as He said of Himself, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. i. 18).

"Whatever may be the aspect of affairs," I said, "and however low and depressed the Church may appear to be, this is not a reason for deserting it, but for loving care and nursing." I continued, "I believe that at this time the Lord is maintaining and reviving His work, notwithstanding all hindrances and discouragements. When the sun is about to rise in the morning, the light spreads, and the birds begin to sing. There never was a time in the Church's history when there was more Gospel light, and never a time of more hymns and real spiritual songs. The Lord is indeed present with His Church; and He is coming nearer and nearer to us, that we may be present with Him for ever, in a glorified state."

I felt that the Lord was speaking through me, and cheering this assembly of His children. My soul was very happy in being thus used. In this way He in His goodness made me known to the people, and gave me acceptance amongst them. Warm and kind were their greetings after the service. Dear Mr. Pennefather put his arm round me and gave me a kiss, though I was but a stranger, dropped from some unknown quarter!

It pleased God to give me then and there many friends who have remained steadfast ever since. It was as if we had been looking for one another, and had met at last with mutual recognition. Some were from London and different parts of England; some from Scotland; and others from Ireland.

Mr. Pennefather detained me after the Conference to preach in his church on Sunday. This I did three times, holding an after-meeting in the evening in the schoolroom, when several souls found peace.

On Monday there was a large representative Bible-reading at the Vicarage, at which I was asked to give the address. I said, that at the Conference I had spoken of the Lord's presence *with us*; now I would speak of our presence *with Him*. He did not come to save us only; but having saved, to lead us onward. He says (Mark iv. 35), "Let us pass over unto the other side." Observe, He does not say, "*Go*," but, "*Let us go;*" and not only so, but let us pass over to the other side, even all the way to the glory land. The disciples began well in taking the Lord into the ship with them; but evidently they had forgotten that their peace did not depend upon this act, but rather upon trusting Him continuously. Their confidence was placed elsewhere, for when there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, they were sore afraid and ran to Jesus, saying, "'Master, carest Thou not that we perish?' And He arose and rebuked the wind (which was the cause of the waves, as Satan is the cause of trials—see Job i.), and said unto the sea, 'Peace, be still!' and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. . . . And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, 'What manner of Man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?'" (Mark iv. 38–41). In the sudden and wondrous stillness, the Lord asked them the two following questions, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" First, Why those fears, except that they had for the time forgotten that they were with the Lord, and consequently were as safe as He? Secondly, How was it they had no faith? Faith does not consist in one act only, but in continuously doing what is commanded. The Lord had not asked them to *take* Him, but to pass over *with* Him to the other side. He is ever present with us; but we lose the joy and benefit of His presence, if we do not remember the fact, and abide by it.

We see that it is a mistake to rest upon the fact of our safety, or on any circumstances connected with it. Neither should we rest on the memory that we at a certain time did take the Lord with us and embark. We must not dwell on the past, or on our present state; but on the Saviour Himself—His promised Presence with us, and ours with Him.

Mr. Pennefather, with a radiant countenance, gave out the following hymn:—

"Why those fears? Behold, 'tis Jesus
Holds the helm and guides the ship;
Spread the sails, and catch the breezes
Sent to waft us through the deep,
To the regions
Where the mourners cease to weep.

"Though the shore we hope to land on
Only by report is known,
Yet we freely all abandon,
Led by that report alone;
And with Jesus
Through the trackless deep move on.

"Led by Him, we brave the ocean;
Led by Him, the storms defy;
Calm amidst tumultuous motion,
Knowing that our Lord is nigh:
Waves obey Him,
And the storms before Him fly."

So the Conference and its subsequent meetings were concluded, and I left to return to Bath. I came back greatly refreshed and cheered with my visit, rejoicing in the friends the Lord had given me, and looking forward with anticipation to meeting them again in London, Norfolk, and elsewhere.

I had been told that it would be useless to begin work at Buckenham till the harvest was over; so I remained in Bath till September, carrying on active operations, especially in the open air. During these last months we lived on Beechen Cliff, from which elevation we looked down upon the city. Sometimes it was enveloped in fog, with towers and spires protruding; and sometimes it looked like a fairy scene, especially on a clear night, when the innumerable gas lamps presented a remarkable picture.

My last remembrance of Bath, I must say, was more pleasant than the beginning. I had now many friends, and among them not a few who at first had no sympathy with me.

Early in September 1863 we left this place, where I had passed through so many spiritual conflicts and exercises of soul. Taking train to London, we proceeded by steamer to Great Yarmouth, where we landed the next day. Here we remained till the Rectory at Buckenham was ready to receive us.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Buckenham.

1863.

AT length the day arrived for my induction to the Rectory of Buckenham and Hassingham. All other preliminaries of institution, and paying of fees (of which there are too many) being completed, a neighbouring Vicar, who had the commission, came to perform the ceremony. He brought me to the church, and setting my hand upon the latch of the door, said, "I induct you as Rector;" then giving me the key, he bade me go in, lock the door on the inside, and ring the bell.

I entered, and locking the door, knelt down for a few minutes; after which in due time I took hold of the rope and rang the bell in true ringers' style. When I came out the Vicar said—

"What in the world made you so long? Could you not find the bell-rope?"

"Yes," I said, "but I knelt down first to thank God, and to ask Him to give me His blessing here for the salvation of many souls." I am afraid he did not quite understand my meaning; so he wished me "good-bye," and drove off.

After I was duly installed in this small parish, which consisted of nine cottages only, I began to contrast it with the teeming population I had left. Could it be that God had shelved us in a pleasant country place for asking to be removed?

However, notwithstanding the small population, we had good congregations the first Sunday in both churches, especially in the afternoon at Buckenham, which was the larger of the two.

The old gamekeeper, who was a self-righteous kind of man, had been praying to the Almighty, as he said, to send a man who would do them some good; and as a matter of course, came to church to see the result of his prayers.

"Well," he remarked, "I think I do like this man pretty well; you see, he ain't like our old Revarand;—he put his spectacles on, and opened his book, he did; but this here Revarand, he do take off his spectacles, and shut up the book, and move himself about more lively like. Yes, I do think I like the man pretty well; yes, pretty well."

The fact was, that some of my words had hit self-righteous and unconverted people rather hard. I was obliged to be very elementary, for upon previous inquiry in the neighbourhood, I had ascertained that no one knew anything about conversion.* There was not even a little Primitive chapel within three miles of my church. I found it most difficult to preach to people so entirely dark and ignorant.

After the service at Buckenham church, my attention was drawn to a young farmer whom I had also seen at Hassingham in the morning. He was standing with five or six others in the churchyard, and I could tell by their countenances that they were interested, if not awakened. I invited them to come to the Rectory for a meeting in the evening at six o'clock; but as they did not promise to do so, I acceded to the request of a gentleman who asked me to give an address at his coach-house, three miles off.

I left my dear wife to speak to any anxious ones, should they present themselves. To her surprise upwards of sixty persons came, and filled our unfurnished drawing-room. Many sat on the boxes which were deposited there, and others stood. She gave them an address, and when I came home told me, to my great joy, that six had found peace; and that they had asked for another meeting. This was indeed cheering news!

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* One woman, after saying "No" to my inquiry on this subject, remembered, that when her brother was ill, a man came to see him, who prayed very loud with him, and that when he was dying, he shouted and clapped his hands. She ran in to see what was the matter, and found him sitting up in the bed rejoicing. He said, "My sins are pardoned, it's all right; I am going to heaven!" Thinking he was mad, she ran out of the house in a fright; and when she came back, he was dead, with a happy smile on his countenance.

Another person to whom we spoke about her soul, said, "Was you always religious like this?" "Oh dear, no!" I replied; "we used to be worldly like other people; but by the grace of God we have been changed—born again." She said she knew nothing about that—born again!

"Have yer been born twice?"

"Yes," I said.

"Well," she continued, "I've lived a number of years in this neighbourhood; and I'm sure people are never born but once about here!"

The next evening the drawing-room would not hold all who came; so we opened the windows, and let the people stand in the verandah. Again, the Lord blessed the Word to the salvation of souls. Finding so great an interest excited, I promised to provide further accommodation. To accomplish this, I suspended all other business, in order to make a large outhouse on the premises available. In a short time this also was too strait. Then we removed to a barn we had thought of pulling down, which was capable of holding more than two hundred people. Before long, this accommodation proved insufficient; so that some of the men who attended asked permission to repair and enlarge the place at their own expense, which they did.

Here our meetings were continued almost every night for eight months. Great and memorable meetings they were, for seldom an evening passed without blessing to souls; and sometimes as many as ten, and even twenty, professed to find peace.

People had said the Norfolk folks were like turnips—they would not cry out, even if they were thrust through and through with the sword; and like turnip lanterns—they would never take fire. But for all this we found that they had hearts which could be moved by the Word of God, and souls that could be kindled by His love.

Besides all this spiritual work which came upon us thus suddenly, we had a great deal to occupy us in setting our house in order. Trees had to be cut down, to let light and air into our dwelling, and the said dwelling had to be furnished; the garden to be made tidy for the winter; and, above all, the pump to be repaired.

The old gardener, speaking of this pump, said—

"The water is first-rate, and the spring abundant."

He spoke so much of it, that I was quite pleased when the machinery was mended that I might prove it. To my dismay, however, the water was both foul and disagreeable.

"How is this?" I inquired.

It was because the water had been stagnant for several weeks; but when the well was in constant use and the water flowing, it kept fresh, and never failed either winter or summer. So, thought I, is it with the well of water within us. If we are not living for others, and witnessing for God and His truth, we also become stagnant, and savour of self, or some idiosyncrasy of our own, with which we bore every one who comes near. We cannot be clear, fresh, and sparkling, unless we draw from the Living Fountain continually, and let the water of life flow out freely to others.

Before our house was in order, a neighbouring clergyman called, and found us in our unprepared state. I told him we had been so fully occupied with God's work, that it had left us but little time for our own. He kindly took a seat on one of the unpacked boxes, putting his hat on another, and we talked about the work.

I asked him whether he had anything of the same kind in his parish?

"No," he replied; "but I preach the Gospel every Sunday, for all that."

"It cannot be the fault of the Word," I said, "if you have no result; and it cannot be God's."

"I suppose, then, you mean to say that it is mine!"

"Well," I answered, "I must say that I usually blame myself when there is no blessing in my parish. How people can go on preaching the Gospel, which is 'the power of God unto salvation,' and be contented without conversions, I cannot tell!"

In the course of conversation he told me that a relative of his had warned him against *revivals and dissenters.*

"Oh," I said, "that will easily account for want of blessing. A revival is the work of God Himself—it is no revival if it is not: and dissenters are not unfrequently God's only witnesses in a parish."

He said, "I do not believe in dissenters."

Finding that he was getting restless, I proposed to have prayer. This he declined, saying, "No, thank you!" and at once rose to go away. We walked together as he led his horse to the gate. Then stopping abruptly, he said, "I'll have that prayer you proposed." "Very well," I replied, "so you shall. Come back with me." We returned and prayed together.

Then he rose up and said, "Will you come and preach in my parish?"

"Certainly, with pleasure."

"My church is very small, you know."

"Never mind; I will come."

He then knelt down of his own accord, and said, "Lord, incline the hearts of the farmers to open their barns for preaching." After promising to write, he took his departure.

I heard the next day that the first farmer he called upon readily assented to his proposal; and that they had fixed for me to go the following Monday.

True to the appointment I appeared, and found the place filled to suffocation. Where the people came from I could not tell, for there were very few houses in the neighbourhood. Here we had a great revival of God's work, in which the Vicar rejoiced vehemently, and in the fulness of his heart went round and shook hands with all the dissenters in the congregation. It was a most encouraging and happy meeting.

There, and in other places in that parish, I continually held services, in alternation with my own. Many remarkable conversions took place, and a publican threatened that he would write to the bishop, and acquaint him that "the Revarands were a-praying with the Primitives." The fact was, that he was irritated because his usual customers were better employed than in drinking at his house.

His daughter attended the meetings. One evening she went home rejoicing and told her father that she was converted.

"Don't tell me," he cried, "you're converted. Don't you know that these here people are taking the very bread out of our mouths? Get out of my house with yer," and striking her on the face, he drove her out, and slammed the door.

She was much hurt by his violence, but was happy in her soul, and crept into the straw-shed for the night. Her poor mother had no rest or sleep, and the next morning was too ill to attend to the house; so the father rose early to seek for his daughter, and on finding her, ordered her to go in at once and do her work. She willingly returned to her poor mother, and was busy all day. Her father looked at her several times with anger; and in the evening when she ventured to ask him whether she might go to the meeting (having promised to do so), his rage became ungovernable, and he threw his cup of hot tea at her, but fortunately missed his mark. She picked up the broken pieces, and began to wipe the wall and the floor, saying, "Never mind, father; I'll give it up."

At eight o'clock her father came to her, and said, "Thee has been a good girl; get along to yer meeting."

She burst into tears of disappointment, and said, "It's too late now, father; it will be all over by the time I get there."

"Never mind, girl," he said; "don't cry. I'll go with thee to-morrow."

On the morrow he did go, and was awakened, and came home penitent and broken-hearted. The second day he found peace, and from that time was a most decided Christian. He used to urge his customers to go to the meetings, telling them what good he himself had received. After a time, he determined to give up that business; and nothing would do, but I must come and preach in his public-house before he did so. It must be on a Saturday, for that was the day when most mischief was done.

Accordingly, on the appointed Saturday evening, I arrived at seven o'clock, and found a few people standing outside the door. I said, "Won't you come in?" to which they replied, "There is no room inside." I knocked, and the door was opened. On entering, I saw the stairs before me were filled with people, as well as a wide passage; also the parlours on my right and left. I was told that every chamber upstairs was crowded, and the back kitchen besides: "The whole house is just filled. There are more than two hundred people in it; and though you cannot see them, they will all be able to hear."

I had the door-mat for a pulpit, and, standing there, gave out a familiar hymn. Our singing was very indifferent; and the more hearty we tried to make it, the more irregular it became. When we had finished the first verse, we could hear that our unseen friends in the various rooms were a long way behind: however, they meant well. I gave out a second verse, which was by no means more successful than the first. I may say in Norfolk phraseology, the singing was "very moderate," or "somewhat slight."

I took for my text, "Go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" (Matt. ix. 13). "God does not require sacrifices from us for our salvation, but desires to show mercy. If we will let Him, He is ready and willing to save us."

While I was speaking, a smothered voice from one of the chambers was heard saying, "Lord, save me!" but as it did not disturb me, I went on with my address. Then another said, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" and yet one more in another part of the house. Still I proceeded, till a man with a loud voice standing near me cried aloud for mercy. This appeared to be a signal for all. On the stairs, in the passages, in the parlours, in the chambers, and in the kitchens, there were people crying in distress of soul, while others were adding to the noise by their loud "Amens" and shouts of praise. This for quiet Norfolk was indeed surprising!

With some difficulty I went from room to room, and satisfied myself that the work was general. Soon cries for mercy were exchanged for songs of praise. Some of the people sang one hymn, and some another, in the various rooms: this continued until ten o'clock, when I thought it was time to break up. We therefore concluded; and the company dispersed, continuing to sing as they went along the lanes.

After the people had gone, the thankfulness of the landlord was unbounded. He called his family together, and found that they were all rejoicing. "Now," said the mother, "there's one absent one—let's pray for him." This was the parting act of that remarkable evening.

I asked "mine host" if he had written to tell this son about his *cwn* conversion. "Oh, bless you!" he said, "I did that the first thing, and asked him to give his heart to God too."

"Then," I added, "please write and tell him that we have prayed for him." Letters crossed upon the sea; and the son's letter contained the joyful news that he had given his heart to God, and was rejoicing in forgiveness.

Many such incidents were related from time to time, which considerably enhanced the interest of the barn meetings. Truly it was surprising to hear of the conversion of some of the most unlikely people. Farmers, who are generally complained of as hard to catch, were one by one opening their hearts to the Lord, and their barns for His work. Week by week I found myself deeply engrossed with numerous engagements. Work of this kind being new in the neighbourhood, I had for the time quite a monopoly of it. I did not sit down and cry for want of sympathy, or because I had the cold shoulder instead; but rather I rejoiced in being used of the Lord—though I was alone.

What is a light for, except to shine in the darkness? or what is fire for, except to give heat in a cold place? I did not complain of the darkness of the neighbourhood, or of its coldness; but was the more stimulated to greater exertion.

As the meetings increased, excitement prevailed, and opposition was stimulated. A clergyman who had attended one of our barn services called to see Sir Thomas, but not finding him at home, told her ladyship of the "sad and dreadful scenes" he had witnessed. He said that "there were men standing up with outstretched arms praying in a most extravagant manner; and women almost in hysterics—indeed, there was a frantic noise and confusion everywhere."

"Were the people angry, or fighting?" asked her ladyship.

"Oh no, my lady, nothing of that kind: they were more like intoxicated people—quite unmanageable; though I must say they looked very happy."

"Is not that better than the stillness of spiritual death?" said her ladyship calmly.

The visitor was silent, and soon took his departure. He went about after this saying that "the Beauchamps were every bit as bad as Haslam."

It is true Sir Thomas did rejoice in the work, though at times with some trembling; for there were many complaints (exaggerated, of course), and he was much blamed for bringing "such a firebrand into a quiet neighbourhood."

One gentleman, a great friend of his, said to him, "There is sure to be rebellion. The labourers are saying to their masters, 'Are you converted?' There will be rebellion, take my word for it. The people are singing hymns in the lanes all night long. And how can they attend to their work?"

Sir Thomas could not see that ruin was so imminent; but he promised to inquire about the things which were said to be taking place the other side of the river.

CHAPTER XIX.

Rest and Progress.

1863.

THE glorious work was now beginning to spread on all sides. If churches were closed against me, they were of but small capacity; while large and commodious barns were opened. One gentleman said, "I never knew before what my grandfather built these large barns for; but the Lord has found good use for them."

Night after night in one place or another, including my own barn, the work went on for seven or eight weeks. Then my strength began to fail, and my back to ache; but there was no stopping. Just at this time I received an invitation to go to Dublin; but thinking the work at home could not go on without me, and that my presence was absolutely necessary for its continuance, I declined. Soon, however, the Lord showed me that it was His work, and that He could easily raise up other workers. This He did, and gave me what I so greatly needed, a total rest for three weeks.

One Monday afternoon feeling unusually weak and tired, I asked the Lord to undertake for me, and then lay down on the sofa for two hours' rest. I had scarcely settled on my back, when a young converted farmer arrived with his horse and gig, to take me to my evening appointment at L——, which was three miles off. I said, "Why have you come so long before your time? I want to rest."

"Oh, never mind that," he replied, "I've got business yonder; I'll get you a sofa and some tea. Do come with me now."

I rose up, and went with him. The tea and the sofa were provided, it is true; but there was no rest, for I had much talking to do. The service in the evening was a happy and very rousing one, so that I forgot all my pains, and went on till eleven o'clock.

On putting the horse into the gig to return home, my friend observed that one of the springs was broken. He said, "It is not safe for us to ride in this. You had better stay here for the night."

I could not agree to his proposition, neither could I walk home. At last the Vicar kindly said, "I will drive you back," and at once proceeded with his servant in all haste to harness the pony. This done, we started off in the car at a great rate, when presently the Vicar quietly remarked, "My pony has run away! I cannot manage him."

"Never mind," I replied, "keep him in the middle of the road, and let him go; we shall be home all the sooner." I had not said this many moments when the animal began to kick, and continued galloping and kicking as we went. Every time his heels came in contact with the carriage the splinters flew in all directions. Thus we were hurried along, and this is all I remember: I believe the carriage came to pieces, and we were thrown out.

My farmer friend (who had gone on before, leading his horse with the fractured carriage), in the stillness of the night, heard us coming; he heard also the crashing kicks of the pony, and then saw the creature dashing past him with the shafts and harness hanging at its sides. He turned back, and by the bright moonlight observed broken pieces of the carriage strewn along the road. Then he found me lying unconscious, in a pool of blood, as he called it, but I was "not *quite* dead!" A little farther on he perceived the Vicar, lying beside the road as if asleep. On being aroused he soon recovered himself, and limped forward to my help. While he remained with me bemoaning the sad event, the farmer went to a neighbouring house, and roused up the inmates to borrow a carriage. Then putting his own horse into it, they lifted me up, and carefully drove home. It was after two o'clock when we arrived. Having laid me in bed, they started off five miles farther to fetch the doctor. On examining me, he pronounced that there was not much the matter, beyond a scalp wound, from which he believed I should soon recover if I was kept very quiet, and not allowed to read or talk.

Thus I was laid down for a fortnight. God was resting me. It might appear to some a strange way to rest; but rest it truly was, and I scarcely know how I could have had it in any other way. I had suffered no pain; and the loss of blood, the doctor said, was rather in my favour than otherwise. I had therefore abundant reason to thank God; and that not only for myself, but for the work's sake also.

During the time I was laid aside, I was astonished to find what general interest was awakened in my behalf. Most unlikely people called at the house to inquire after me; and their numerous acts of kindness and consideration quite moved me. I had no idea that God had given me such acceptance in the neighbourhood; for, judging from reports, I had come to the conclusion that every one was against me, and that there would have been but little regret had I remained insensible altogether.

Among these visitors was my churchwarden, an old-fashioned farmer, who had been very much opposed to the "Revarand's proceedings," and "very angry with him." Notwithstanding this, he called three and four times a-day, always bringing something in his hand. Once it was grapes, then new-laid eggs, then a chicken, then a partridge, and so on. At each visit he gave my wife some good advice about the "Revarand" in future. "You know, madam, people say that this accident is God's judgment on him for going into other parishes without leave. Next time, madam, he will be killed outright; I'm sure he will, madam!"

When I was allowed to see my churchwarden, he came tenderly and softly into the room, and his affection and kindness were very touching. He said he was most unhappy about me, for he considered my life was a valuable one, and he was so afraid that I should kill myself with all these preachings. There was no need to preach so often; or, if I would excuse him, so loud and so long. He also thought that I should certainly do better if I did not encourage those dissenters. "They are radicals, sir! they have the run of the parish night and day, sir; a parcel of radicals, sir. They'd pull down the church to-morrow! A bad lot, sir, be sure. One of them actually told me that I was not converted."

When I was sufficiently restored to come down to the sofa, another visitor called to see me. This was an Indian prince of high degree, who had come over the river with Sir Thomas's shooting-party. In his impetuosity he had shot away all his ammunition, and in breaking through the woods had lost one of his diamond earrings. He said he would not go out shooting in diamond earrings any more.

As I was not allowed to talk, he kindly bid me lie still while he told me about himself, and his conversion. He said, that when he was a boy in India, he had a great wish to hear the Bible read; so ordered it to be done. His moonshee demurred a little, but seeing the order was to be obeyed, he procured a Bible in the native tongue. Opening the book, he read (without any design) the first chapter of Genesis; then the first chapter of St. John; and, lastly, the ninth chapter of the Acts.

The prince being deeply interested, sent for the English missionary. This struck the moonshee as very bad. "Toba! toba!—Shame! shame! Your highness will lose caste!" But caste or no caste, the missionary was sent for to explain the chapters. This eventually led to the prince being baptized and received into the Church. Afterwards it became dangerous for him to stay in the country, for some fanatical men were bent on taking his life.

He decided to come to England, expecting, as he said, to find that all young Englishmen were happy Christians. Instead of this, he saw that many of them were far more immoral than those in India; and some absolutely irreligious. He then became sceptical, and doubted the reality of Christianity altogether.

After going on thoughtlessly for several years, he was suddenly arrested by the death of one of his Indian attendants. This poor man was seized with cholera in the middle of the night, and was dangerously ill. He understood enough of the Bible to know that he was not ready to die, and that he should go to hell if he did. What with fear and pain, he writhed about in terrible agony, and at last died in despair. The prince was greatly alarmed; so he sent for his European secretary, and cried out, "What shall I do to be saved?" The official was obliged to acknowledge that he really did not know; but added that he had a son who could tell his highness all about it. The son was ordered up immediately; and he pointed the penitent to the Lamb of God who has taken away the sin of the world. "Then," said the prince, "I found peace, and became a *real* Christian: I was not *real* before."

When people become real Christians, they should not continue to abide in a spiritual Egypt, but cross the Red Sea; or, if they have crossed that, they should not (as too many of the Israelites did) leave their hearts behind them in Egypt. Their ambition should be to go on to Canaan, and show what God can do over enemies greater and mightier than themselves. Real Christians should prove to the world that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is stronger than sin.

However, the prince's story was most interesting as far as it went; and he himself very original and interesting too.

When able to get out again, I was rejoiced to see the progress of the work, and to find how the Lord had raised up and brought out other workers.

Among the number was a clergyman who came to see me when he heard I was laid aside, and kindly offered his help. He said that he had never preached in another man's parish without leave; but for love of me he would do anything I wished. I took him at his word, and sent him to conduct a barn meeting. Actually the roof did not fall on his head for his temerity, nor did any other calamity befal him. He received great blessing from the Lord in that place, and returned home rejoicing. After this experience he took courage, and worked more freely.

Besides him, there were three or four farmers who became preachers, and many others were raised up to help in different ways.

Thus I found that the Lord had given me the rest I wanted, and had also provided the fellow-labourers who were needful for the progress of the work. In addition, He taught me that He could do without me; and that the work was not mine, but His.

Refreshed with rest, and glad to hear of the progress of the work in all directions, I longed to get out again into the thick of the battle. The atmosphere was full of the sound of revival, and every one was talking of it; whether in the house, on the road, or in the train, this was the one theme of conversation. Opposition also was rife.

One doctor went about saying, "We shall want to build a new wing to the lunatic asylum, for I am sure that many will be driven out of their minds by this excitement." It is true that one dear and happy old man was apprehended by a magistrate's order, and sent away in a cart to the asylum. All the way there he protested that he was not mad. "Yes," said the keeper, who had charge of him, "that is what they all say." However, in two or three days he was liberated; and before his discharge he had the joy of conveying a message of peace and salvation to one or two desponding ones who were shut up in that place.

Previous to being laid aside, I had often observed a young man walking slowly and feebly under the shelter of a hedge. He had been one of the strongest of men, and his bone and muscle indicated probable durability and length of days. But the poor fellow had taken a severe cold, which settled on his lungs, and now he was doomed to die of consumption. I frequently took the opportunity of talking with him about spiritual things, to which he gave general assent; but I could not get more than this from him.

After I had recovered and was about again, I missed him from his accustomed haunt; so made it my business to visit him. I found him sitting over his little fire, being too weak to walk abroad any longer. He was as silent as ever, simply saying "yes" or "no" to everything, as before. After a few interviews I was led to say, "It is useless to come and see you; I might just as well stay at home, and talk to my mantelpiece as talk to you. I will pray with you, and then wish you good-bye."

At the conclusion of prayer I was about to depart, when looking at me in the most imploring manner he said, "Oh, don't leave me."

"What is the good of my coming?"

"There is some good," he replied languidly.

"Do you ever pray?"

"Yes," he said, looking round involuntary at a particular chair, "I try to do so; but when I kneel down such a lot of bad thoughts comes to my mind, I don't know what to do. Sometimes I feels more fit to swear than to pray, and then I get up—I can't pray."

Poor fellow, he was quite exhausted with uttering this long speech, and my heart was drawn towards him. After a few moments' silence, I told him that I was much encouraged by what he had said. "These bad thoughts," I continued, "do not come from God, but from the devil; and what is more, he would never take the trouble to hinder you, if he did not see that you were in right earnest. I will tell you what to do—when I am gone, you kneel down at that chair," I said, pointing to the particular one I had noticed him look at, "and when these bad thoughts come up again, hold on as if for your life—stay there, and say, 'Lord, help me! Lord, help me!' I promise you the cloud will break, and there will be victory for you."

"I will! I will! Only stay with me," said the sick man, rising from his seat.

"No," I answered, "wait till I have gone. You must be alone with God, and the victory will be easier, and sooner."

I called again in the evening, and found the dear man wonderfully softened, and melted with a sense of God's kindness. I said, "Do you now believe that God loves you, and that He gave His own beloved Son to die for you? If so, thank Him." His soul was soon quickened by Divine power, and he gave hearty praise to God for his deliverance. A fuller account of this man's conversion and triumphant departure is given in a tract called "Richard's Victory."

As a rule, opposition, however trying it may be at the time, is nevertheless a clear indication that the Lord is working. So that whether it is in the individual case, or in the larger sphere of work, it is a favourable sign. It ought to bring us nearer to God, and stimulate us to greater exertions, rather than paralyze our efforts, or discourage us.

CHAPTER XX.

Geraldine Hooper.

1863–4.

SOME of my neighbours, the "Revarands," as the Rectors and Vicars of Norfolk are called, made no secret of their thoughts about me. They considered that I was "fanatical," "disorderly," and "irregular," to say nothing worse. At the same time they did not mind letting their people remain in spiritual death, and worse than heathen darkness. Some of them employed their time shooting, fishing, or farming—anything, everything, but the one all-important occupation of winning souls, for which they had been solemnly set apart.

Not a few of these sent complaints to the Bishop about me, and my intrusions; but his lordship wisely remained silent, though he kept their letters stowed up in a drawer, and brought them out on a future occasion.

What with "Brother Ignatius" (as he called himself) outdoing the Romanists in his "monastery" at Norwich, and Haslam surpassing Ranters all over the county, the clergy were roused up to "righteous indignation." I hope it led to more than this; and that some of them at least were awakened to increased energy and carefulness in their parochial, if not their spiritual, duties.

I think that some of the Rectors' wives were even harder upon me than their comparatively forbearing husbands, for I received no quarter from them.

However, I could not help myself, and dared not go back, for I neither designed nor desired such a position. But for the joy of the Lord's work, and the blessing accompanying it, I was perfectly happy and willing to abide the disgrace or disapprobation with which I was regarded. It was bad enough when I went out preaching in all directions; but far worse when Mrs. Haslam began to move out too, and find general acceptance among the people. This was ten times more distasteful.

A Rector's wife wrote to me, as a "brother in the Lord," to say that she and her husband had been praying for a revival in Norfolk for years; but "if this is a revival," she continued, "it has come in such a way that I cannot thank God for it!" She then went on to implore me to "let our dear good Bishop arbitrate. Let us leave the question of women's preaching to his grave decision."

I feared the "grave" far too much, and would not risk having such a useful instrumentality, and one so owned and blessed of the Lord, buried out of existence; nor did I care to involve the Bishop in any responsibility as to our doings.

At this critical time, who should offer us a visit but Miss Geraldine Hooper, from Bath. This young lady, it will be remembered, was a great help to me in Avon Street, and also went about with Mrs. Haslam to cottage and other meetings. After we left that place, she took up our mantle and went forward with a double portion of our spirit, and with much more result. I need not say we welcomed her with much joy. Her striking appearance at our little country church, and the clear ring of her voice in the hymns during the service, attracted considerable attention. When it was known that she would speak at the barn meeting in the evening, the people came out in crowds, and the place was filled in every corner.

Her address was like kindling a fresh fire, and a very bright and warm one it was. The people became wild with admiration, and their eagerness to hear her was intense. Her fame spread so rapidly that the Norwich papers took up the subject. The editor of one of these papers began a series of tirades against Buckenham and the work. Week by week fierce and long articles were published, which of course did not stamp out the fire, but rather added fuel to it.

Just at that time the record of a dreadful event which had taken place was going the round of the newspapers. It was about three thousand people who were burnt alive in St. Jago, in a building from which they could not obtain egress. This was contrasted with our proceedings. "There," it was said, "only bodies were burnt; but here souls were being destroyed every night, and till two o'clock in the morning."

One evening, while the reporter was busy taking notes in the barn, his horse managed to kick his carriage to pieces. I was kind, and lent him mine; but notwithstanding this consideration, in the next issue of the paper there appeared a very exaggerated and spiteful account of that meeting. It stated, among other things which it is needless to rehearse, that "I was sitting quietly in the barn while the ladies were speaking; but then I was only the Rector." I must say it was quite true that I was there, and was delighted to hear the said ladies. They both spoke wonderfully well, and with great power. I do not wonder at the devil being angry, as he certainly was.

While the ladies were in such request at home, I was again urged by my good friend Mr. Bewley to visit Dublin. I accepted his invitation and arranged to go.

The voyage across the Channel was unusually rough, and consequently we were much behind time. Added to this, I was very ill, and felt the motion of the vessel long after landing. I was nevertheless hurried along to Merrion Hall. On arriving there, I was urged to go on the platform, if it were only for a few minutes, to show myself to the large assembly, and tell them I was too ill to speak. I could scarcely stand steady without holding the rail, and was very exhausted. However, the Lord gave me a message, and I spoke for nearly an hour; and by the end of the address I felt wonderfully well. I then conducted an after-meeting, to which fully a third of the congregation remained. A most memorable meeting it was, the first of many others. Out of utter weakness came strength; and out of helplessness great help. The omnipotent Helper manifested His presence, and many souls received blessing.

Mr. Bewley was delighted, and in the joy of his heart went forward to arrange other meetings, no less than thirty-two in eight days. With such abundant provision, and a people ready to hear, I prolonged my stay, and then returned to my work at home.

I feel that I must insert here one incident that occurred during my visit, for it was so characteristic of dear Mr. Bewley, and the Lord's way with him. One morning I received a letter from my dear wife, reminding me that the expenses of removing and doing up the Rectory at Buckenham had brought us into debt a hundred pounds, and that she felt that if I told Mr. Bewley my circumstances, he would gladly help us. I did not see my way to this, having already put the matter into the Lord's hands. She wrote back to say it was all pride and shame, and that I was afraid to ask—that she felt sure Mr. Bewley would help, and had a great mind to write herself. I was considering this letter upstairs in my room, and waiting upon the Lord about it, when Mr. Bewley called me down. As soon as we were seated in his study, he said, "I am going to ask you a very impertinent question: How much is your living worth?"

I replied "£300 a year."

"Is that enough for you and your large family? Do you want help?"

I said, "Here is a letter come from my wife to-day. I was considering it upstairs when you called me. Now that you ask, I do not mind telling you."

He said the Lord had that morning bid him give me a hundred pounds. "There it is," he added, handing me a cheque for that amount. This he had written before calling me down. He said, "I have much gratification and thankfulness in giving it. God bless you, and yours!" With tears in his eyes, the dear man shook my hand warmly; tears were in mine too.

On my return home I found that the ladies were invited to large barns in other parishes, and also to the theatres in Yarmouth and Norwich. One clergyman "seriously objected to women's preaching," saying, "The Scripture teaches that they should mind their children at home!" But this did not apply to Miss Hooper, as she had none to mind. Having once heard her, however, his mind was so changed that he declared he would "go through fire and water to hear her again."

"You shall hear her again," I said. "She is to preach in your neighbourhood in two days' time: I cannot be there; so you go, and be her chaplain." He assented. It so happened that he had to go through drenching rain (that was the water). When he arrived, to his amazement he found that as the barn would not hold the people, they had gone, preacher and all, into the Primitive Methodist Chapel. He followed, and went in too, but did not hear the last of it for a long time (that was the fire). So actually he did go through both fire and water; but not without reward, for he was converted, and afterwards became a zealous and useful man.

Miss Hooper's popularity attracted hundreds of people to the barn meetings. One evening at the end of January, as I was returning home on a clear frosty night, I could hear singing, though I was nearly a mile from my house. On approaching nearer I distinguished the tune, and thought I could hear Miss Hooper's voice. Hastening forwards, I was astonished at the scene before me. It was a bright moonlight night, with snow on the ground and a cold north-east wind. In spite of this, there was a very large concourse of people standing in rapt attention, listening to the preaching.

Miss Hooper, in company with Mrs. Haslam, was standing in a cart, round which were suspended from the trees my drawing-room and dining-room lamps, besides other lights. I was told that the barn was full of people, and also the adjoining class-room. Standing among the crowd, I heard the best part of the address. In her characteristic way she told a humorous story, but one which I have no doubt is well remembered by many to this day. It made the audience smile for the time; but the application of it was very solemn and pointed.

She said that a gentleman once went to visit a friend of his in a lunatic asylum, and while he was standing at the balcony a strong man suddenly caught hold of him with a tight grasp, and said, "Jump down! jump down!" With much presence of mind he calmly replied, "Why, any fool can do that; but come with me, I will show you a far better trick." The lunatic followed him down the stairs into the garden. "Now," said the gentleman, pointing to the same balcony, "you take and jump up there—that's the thing for a man to do." The poor lunatic tried; I need not tell with what result. "Any fool," she continued, "can go to hell:—but come with me, I can show you the way to heaven. You cannot get there by your own efforts, but Christ can lift you in."

Words cannot convey an adequate idea of the tone and manner, or the unction and power, with which this simple story was applied; but the effect was marvellous, and the result great. At the end of the address she dismissed the congregation, inviting the anxious ones to come into the barn.

On another occasion, in a large barn, so great was the pathos and feeling with which she read the story of the Prodigal Son, that not a few amongst the audience were moved to tears. Farmers and labourers alike brought out their handkerchiefs, and used them freely. I said to one of the farmers, a most unpromising man, "What made you cry?"

"Oh," he replied, beginning again, "I don't know, but when she said, that yon young man was away in a far country—I thought it was me—I felt very far off," and then he sobbed again. This dear man was converted that night.

Besides her winning influence, this young lady was able, by her readiness and wit, to control the largest and roughest meetings. It not unfrequently happened, that the people, in their eagerness to enter and obtain good places, jostled one another, so that angry feeling and altercations arose; but a word from her soon brought the dispute to an end. One evening there was likely to be a serious disturbance. This was caused by a man sitting in a front row, keeping on his tall hat. The people behind called to him to take it off. He rudely refused to do so, whereupon another man threatened to "knock it off." He defied him, saying, "Come up and do it; that's all!" Miss Hooper instantly rose, and said quietly, "Let the gentleman wear his hat, by all means; perhaps he has something the matter with his head."

"I hain't!" cried the man, hastily taking off the obnoxious appendage. There was a shout of laughter, but that was as quickly silenced, and the proceedings of the evening went on smoothly.

Among many persons brought to the Lord by her instrumentality, there was a remarkable man, a gardener, whose name was Robert Wells. When I arrived at Buckenham, four months previously, Robert was one of the first who came to speak to me about his soul. He said, that he had been anxious for a long time, and had gone the round of all the churches and chapels in the neighbourhood, with the hope of hearing something which would do him good. Only the Sunday before he had attended a church where the "Revarand was all upon rummaging they Ranters;—that," he added, "did my soul no good!" Speaking of me, he declared that I "was a kind of fortune-teller, who knew his very thoughts—a conjuror—I'm afraid of he altogether!" Nevertheless, he held out against all I could say, and was one of our most active opponents. One night at a barn service he was pointed out to Miss Hooper, in his own hearing, as that man with the grey shawl over his shoulder. "Oh," he said, "I did feel in a fright, when I see'd the young lady a-coming along—if there'd been a mouse's hole to get into, I'd have made my escape. It was all over with me that night; I was conwarted right away, and no mistake!"

Truly it was so; he was most wonderfully changed, and became a valiant champion for the truth. His sayings and doings attracted attention for several years; and many events of his life are worthy of record. But here I must forbear.

Miss Hooper's* power was irresistible; people were spellbound, as if obliged to do as she bid them; nevertheless, they were willing also.

Once, as I was walking with her to the station to go to Norwich, I saw a noted gamekeeper and his dog before me in the lane. "There is Henry," I said, "with his savage dog—that rough, cruel man. I do wish you would give him a word, and I will get the tickets." While we were still speaking he looked round, and seeing us coming, quickened his pace to keep out of our way. That was enough, my young friend was off towards him. When he perceived that she was overtaking him, he changed his course and crossed the line. She followed in his track, and soon came up even with the dog, which was following his master, led by a chain. She patted its back, at which the animal seemed pleased and wagged its tail; so she continued stroking him, when the man growled over his shoulder without turning round, "You'd better take care o' that dog."

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* Those who would like to know more of this excellent lady may read her Memoir, written by Mrs. Grattan Guinness, in an interesting volume, entitled "She Spake of Him." Partridge & Co.

"Oh," she replied, "dogs never bite me; I am fond of them, and they know it. Is this your dog?"

"Yes."

"Did you rear it?"

"Yes."

"Do you feed it? And does it come when you call it?"

"On course he do."

"What would you say if he did not come, or if he snarled at you and followed the poachers?"

"Why, I'd shoot him pretty quick!"

"I believe you would. Now, do you know, I think God has done very much more for you than ever you did for this dog? Do you love God? Do you come when He calls you? Or do you follow that old poacher, the devil, and like him and his company a deal better?"

He was silent. What more she said I do not know; but by the time I came up he was in tears. Before the train moved on he promised to attend the barn meeting that evening. He did so, and also remained to the after-meeting. Then and there he surrendered himself to God, and sought for mercy. He did not find peace that night or the next: but on the following day came to tell us how the Lord had saved his soul, and made him happy in a Saviour's love.

Miss Hooper's last meeting at Buckenham was held on Sunday evening, February 16th, 1864. It was a bright moonlight night; and although very cold, she stood out in the open air in a waggon, her usual pulpit on such occasions. At the conclusion of her address, she most solemnly warned the concourse of people, that "there would come a last day of grace, and a last day of life, to each one" there, and affectionately urged all those, who had not hitherto done so, to come to the Saviour.

Dear Mr. Bewley had generously given me forty thousand tracts and little books for distribution in Norfolk; and being anxious to know how many people were present that night, I brought out forty packets, each containing fifty books. Placing men at the three gates, I bid them give one to each person as they passed. In this way I ascertained that more than eighteen hundred persons were present.

The gratitude and esteem of the people for miles round were very great; and they would not let her go without a testimonial of their regard and affection. They made among themselves a subscription for a handsome gold watch, which was duly purchased and presented to her, with a suitable inscription.

From this place she went forward to London, Bath, and many other places; and continued speaking incessantly as she had done in Norfolk. She died August 12, 1872, at the early age of thirty-one. On her monument is inscribed the following testimony:—

> "During the last years of her brief life she proclaimed the glorious Gospel of the Grace of God not less than four thousand times to large assemblies in Bath and other parts of England."

Hundreds of souls will bless God to all eternity, for the good they received through the instrumentality of this wonderful young lady.

CHAPTER XXI.

Norwich.

1864.

MISS HOOPER'S fame, together with the newspaper reports, brought out hundreds of people from Norwich to our barn meetings, though the distance was eight or nine miles. The frequent trains to and from Norwich, which stopped at Buckenham, helped some of them, one or both ways; but the greater number were independent of vehicular transit. They marched in companies, singing along the road, particularly when they were going back at night.

On the whole, I do not think that we gained anything by this large influx; for formerly the people came with desire, as the Lord bid them; but afterwards too many did so from curiosity, to see what was going on. Consequently, there was more distraction and dryness in the meetings.

Many and frequent were the invitations to preach in Norwich, some of which I accepted for the ladies, reserving myself for a call from one or more of the numerous clergy. At last I received one from a Vicar, which I accepted. He announced me, not as the "Rector of Buckenham," but as "Mr. Haslam, who speaks at the Barnet Conference." He proposed to have a "little conference" too. We had two or three very good meetings; but he was afraid to lay himself out for evangelistic effort.

At length a gentleman, who was tired of waiting for the clergy (especially as one of them boasted that "there are nearly fifty churches in Norwich, and Mr. Haslam is shut out of all"), hired the Lecture Hall, and invited me to preach there. When I agreed to do so, he had very conspicuous bills, in large letters, displayed all over the city, announcing "Mr. Haslam is coming!" In due time the notorious gentleman arrived, and a large crowd assembled to hear him, not forgetting the reporter. This man amused his readers with a description of the Evangelist, his dress, his tone, and his manner of pronouncing or mis-pronouncing words. After this came an outline of the address, which was anything but correct; concluding with a humorous description of the after-meeting. This was not a bad advertisement, for it drew the attention of many, and resulted in my being asked to conduct another series of meetings in the same place. At the close of one of these services the owner of the hall sided up to me and said, "A lady has authorized me to say that you may have the use of the Hall as often as you like, without charge."

"Who is she?" I inquired, intending to thank her.

The gentleman withheld her name, so I said, "Give her my Christian regards and thanks, and tell her that I accept her offer." From that time I availed myself of this commodious building, which held fourteen hundred people. After this, I used it regularly for seven years on Sundays, and also on Thursday evenings.

These services became part of the regular institution of the city, and were announced accordingly. Indeed, they were proverbial. If any were anxious about their souls it was said, "Oh, you must go to the Lecture Hall!" Or if any one was venturesome enough to propose going, he or she was warned, "Take care: you're sure to be converted if you go there!"

In spite of this warning, one young lady, having been to hear "Brother Ignatius," thought it right, as she said, "to hear the other side," and therefore ventured to come to the Hall. She was duly converted, as had been predicted.

This young lady was not only present at the service, but remained for the after-meeting. Her object was to see it all through, as she said; and for the purpose of better observation, she stood on the steps of the platform with a glass to her eye. While she was thus engaged in watching the proceedings, I asked her if she was saved? "Oh, dear no," she replied, "I do not know anything about it. What is going on there?" she continued, pointing to the body of the Hall where some of the people were praying, some rejoicing, and others were speaking to the anxious. I explained as well as I could in a few words; "but," I said, "this meeting is as much for you as it is for them." I then sat down and talked with her, and after prayer she went away.

I called on her the next day; and to my joy I found that both she and her sister had given their hearts to God, with a firm determination to forsake the world. Very soon after this they began to work for the Lord. One collected a number of rough and unruly boys, over whom she exercised a magical influence, and was made a great blessing to them. The other was equally blessed to a large number of young women. For these she held a weekly Bible-class, and also taught them to sing, which eventually proved a great help to us in our meetings.

Another instance was that of a man who, one wet night, walked five miles from the country in order to attend the meeting. Seeing him sitting alone and looking very thoughtful, I went up to speak to him. He informed me that he had been "bad about his sins for a week or more," and that he was told if he came here he would lose his burden, and "sure enough," he added, "he's all gone. Do yer think I'm right now?"

I found the man as simple as a child. He could scarcely believe the good news of salvation, for, as he said, it was such a wonderful thing to be saved in that way.

Another man, who was much respected in the city, was teacher in a Sunday-school, and otherwise useful to the clergy of his parish, was very indignant about my coming to Norwich. He thought it was both unnecessary and intrusive, for, as he confessed afterwards, he belonged to "a generation who are pure in their own eyes." He happened to look in one evening during my address, and heard words which were not so bad, or so unscriptural, as he had been led to suppose my teaching was. They made him "think" so much that he commenced writing a journal that very night, to record a new set of thoughts and feelings which had come to his mind. These increased, and with them many fears, together with the consciousness of shortcomings. Whereupon he made resolutions, which were also duly set down in his diary. He read his Bible more frequently, and prayed oftener than had been his custom; but at the end of six weeks he found himself so unhappy that he could not attend to business or anything else. At length he mounted his horse and rode out to my house.

I was very pleased to see him, and all the more so, from having heard of his former opposition. As soon as he began to speak, he burst out crying, and begged I would "excuse him; for he could not help it—it was such a relief to shed tears after having been in distress of mind for so long a time."

With very little teaching he was enabled to lay hold on the offer of salvation set before him; and it soon took hold of him. We rejoiced together, and gave praise to God.

After this, I sent him to a barn tea-meeting, which was to take place that very afternoon. Here he heard the testimony of many young converts, and was able to stand up amongst them and tell about the Lord's goodness to himself that same day.

The news quickly spread in the city, "Mr. A—— is converted: he has been to the Lecture Hall." On the following Sunday he went into the vestry as usual after the morning service. When asked how he was, he said, "I am well, thank God; and what is more, the Lord has opened my eyes."

"Indeed," said the curate with some disdain, for he had heard the reports; "and pray what can you see now?"

"Well," he replied, "strange to say, I can see plainly that you preach the Gospel backwards! I used to think what you said was all right; but now I see that you tell people to live, in order that they may be saved. The fact is, they must be saved before they can live at all."

The curate was amused at what he called the "precocity" of so young a convert; but the "convert" was right for all that. However, it ended in his being dismissed from the Sunday-school. After this, he associated himself with my work at the Hall, and a very great help and encouragement he was all the years I was there.

Many cases of conversion occurred in that place; indeed we seldom had a meeting without.

On one occasion I observed an intelligent-looking young man at one of the after-meetings, and went up to speak to him. He rudely resented my doing so, and then walked away to another part of the Hall. Half an hour later, I observed this same young man come and take a seat close behind a person to whom I was talking. I raised my voice to let him hear, or overhear as much as he would, but did not speak to him. Then I moved farther on to some one else; and he came again and sat near, looking earnestly into my face. Our eyes met several times, till at length I said to him, "Do you wish to give your heart to God?"

"No," he answered, "I do not;" but he slowly added, "I would give anything to wish that."

"Oh, that will do very well: let us kneel down." I did so, and said, "Lord, here is one who would give anything if he could wish to give his heart to Thee; but he has no such desire. O Thou who canst subdue the unruly will, make him willing in this day and time of Thy power—Thy time is *now*." He burst into tears; then sought and found mercy; and from that time became a very steady and firm believer.

Another gentleman of the city, whose mind was much exercised by the "fall," as he called it, of one and another of his friends (meaning their conversion), was very curious to know what kind of mesmeric or other mysterious influence was exercised in that Hall. There was something very perplexing in the change which had taken place in persons with whom he was acquainted—what was it? How was it brought about? What does the man say or do to his audience? He was quite bewildered, anxious to know, and yet afraid to venture inside the building, for fear of consequences.

How many there are like this! They are full of fear about God; yet not afraid of remaining in the power of Satan. This is one of the marks of our lost condition by nature. The children of Adam, like their first father, are afraid of God. They all alike endeavour to cover, or hide, or justify themselves!

A friend of this gentleman's, perceiving his dread, said to him, "I am convinced that if you go near Haslam in your present state, you will 'fall.' Somehow I think you are sure to 'fall' whether you go or not." These words acted like a spell upon him. He could not rest. "You are sure to fall," haunted him.

One particular evening, as he was hurrying past the entrance to the Lecture Hall, he observed in large letters the familiar name of an old fox-hunting and dancing friend of his. It was announced, that this same squire was to preach that very evening at eight o'clock. That hour had already struck. He thought he would give "two pins" to hear his old friend, and see what he looked like in his new character as a preacher. He ventured to open the door, and peep in upon the scene. There was a large congregation; and there also was his friend "as large as life," though not "in pink." He was looking well and happy, not at all long-faced and lanky; nor down-faced, turning up the whites of his eyes in a sanctimonious way. He heard him tell his audience how happy he was; and that he wished them to have the same joy which he possessed. In order that they might, he said, they must give themselves up to the Lord, who has all power in heaven and on earth. "He is willing and able to save you, but can do nothing if you do not let Him." He advised the people to use the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" That, he added, is the way to give up yourself. Or, if you like it better, here are the words of a hymn which we shall sing presently:

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

At this moment some one in the Hall looked round towards the door, perhaps feeling a draught. The gentleman instantly drew back his head for fear of being seen or recognized, and shut the door. He heard no more, but he had heard enough. "Just as I am"—think of that—there is no getting away from that! It is not just as I was, or just as I hope to be, but just as I am now. It was impossible to get away from that position. He walked about the streets for nearly two hours in a perturbed state of mind, getting more and more distracted. At last he went home. His wife was delighted to hear him coming; for she was getting anxious, and was wondering what had become of him. When she saw his distressed condition she said, "Oh, I see where you have been. I told you what would be the consequence if you ventured inside that Hall. Now, what shall we do! It is so tiresome. You ought to have known better." Thus she rated the poor man. He, however, was absorbed in other thoughts. At length he determined to make the publican's prayer his own, and come to the Lord just as he was. To make a long story short, the next morning he found peace and joy in believing.

I will add but one more case connected with this place. It is that of a prodigal son, who was restored to his father, lost but found.

One evening I saw sitting before me, in a front seat, a young man who had been sent up there, for want of room lower down. He was evidently very uneasy at being seated in such a conspicuous place; but before long his attention was riveted. He was dressed like a fisherman, in a suit of tanned canvas. At the after-meeting, seeing he never moved, I went forward to speak to him. I found that he was completely broken down under the burden of his sins. He said, "If ever there was a sinner in the world, I am the man; I've committed every crime, yes, *every crime*, murder and all! I suppose I have been the death of my dear mother long before this, and my father too. Oh! what shall I do? what shall I do?"

He then turned round and fell on his knees in an agony of distress. I pointed him to Christ.

"Oh yes! oh, yes!" he exclaimed. "I know all about that. Did not my dear, dear mother teach me? Ah, how she prayed for me too! and I would not heed her. My dear father also, though he was a man of few words; but I knew what he wanted, and what he meant. I would not mind them, or take their good advice. Oh, what days and nights I have had!"

I directed him to look at Jesus as the sinner's Friend. I said, "This is the first thing to be done: we will attend to the other matters afterwards." It was very difficult for him to fix his mind on the Saviour. However, later on in the night, he found peace with God.

The friend I was staying with having witnessed his distress, and seeing that evidently he was the son of a gentleman, most kindly invited him to his house, saying he would give him a bed.

We brought him home with us, and made him sit down to supper, for he was a good deal exhausted. He ate voraciously, having tasted no food for two days: nothing but drink and tobacco had passed his lips. He certainly was not strange or awkward at table, and apologized continually for his unsuitable dress.

After breakfast the next morning he told us that he was the son of a banker in the North of England; that he had done wrong, and been obliged to run away from home. He had since maintained himself as a fisherman for four or five years, and was now tired of that life—he did not like the company or conversation in the fishing-boats. He had made up his mind to drown himself: he thought that some one would find his body, and perhaps they would bury it. "Now thank God," he said, "I am saved in soul and body too."

Having obtained the necessary information from him by various questions, we (unknown to him) telegraphed to his friends, and soon received an answer full of thanks, with a promise that a letter should follow by post. It came, containing money, and a generous invitation for him to return home.

This young man was forgiven, and restored to his parents, who were still alive; and both rejoiced with great joy to receive their lost one back again.

From time to time we heard many other stories of this character from poor "unfortunates" who were rescued in the Hall, and taken to a "Cottage Home," which was established in connection with the work in this place. Only in eternity will all the good that was done in these meetings be known; and not only in this city, but in many towns in the county. Town Halls and Corn Halls were made available when churches could not be had; and God provided preachers to carry on the work. Several ladies as well as gentlemen were forthcoming, whose labours were then blessed; as in many instances they still continue to be, after a lapse of fifteen years. In some of these places the work has subsided; but in others it has increased tenfold. It is impossible to tell of all these; but let what has been already narrated suffice to show that the Lord is willing to work whenever His people are willing to offer themselves.

In this work I steadily maintained my purpose not to form a church or society in connection with the Hall services. I would not even have a Bible-reading for the converts in Norwich, but urged them to go to their respective pastors. There were already churches and organizations enough in the city; and even if they were not perfect, I did not care to add to them. My object was to teach the lessons, that while in the world we need not be of it, and that though under a dead ministry, we may still trust in Christ.

We are no more responsible for, or implicated in, the misgovernment or maladministration of any system, than we are for the evils in the world. Leaving one church to make another, implies that we can make a better one, or do better than our neighbours. But the history of every such separation tells the same one story. It begins with the intention of making a more perfect system, and ends in something worse. Very few movements ever began with more intelligent repudiation of alleged evils, or with more light from the Word, than that of the Plymouth Brethren; and perhaps none have shown more manifestly the disastrous consequences of secession. They began with separation, and that is what they have reaped; for no movement ever resulted in such endless divisions. They have found fault with one system, but altogether failed in replacing it by a better. They are a large body, with much influence: they have strong arms, and legs too; but no head.

It was suggested to me, "Why do you not leave the Church?" I replied, "Why should I leave it? or what shall I join myself to if I do?" "You know the Bible too well to remain in the Establishment," said an ex-clergyman. He had been very idle and neglectful of the Bible before he seceded; but after that he began to study it with much diligence. I could not help telling him that if he had known the Word better, and had regarded human nature by its light, he would not have left the Church himself. The restlessness and uneasiness of Seceders show that they have not yet attained any peaceful or desirable position. They remind me rather of the fox in the fable, which lost its tail in a trap, and afterwards went about disturbing the minds of other foxes, recommending them all to go without tails.

Besides these disturbers we had another restless kind, very like the troublers who troubled the Galatians. These required that adult converts should be dipped, though they had been baptized as infants; for, as one said, "we must come from out of the water" (John iii. 5). If so, then we must needs come *out* of the Spirit too. I question altogether whether this verse has anything to do with outward baptism. However, notwithstanding all these, and many more difficulties which I do not care to mention, I believe that I was instrumental in bringing some spirituality into this city, and also to many towns and villages in the county. In spite of all my precautions, if dissent and separation ensued, I am bold to say it was not caused by people being brought from death unto life, or by their being better acquainted with their Bibles, but rather by the deficiency of those who would not, and could not, teach them.

For instance, a chapel or room was built not far from Norwich, which the Rector of the place named "St. Haslam's Chapel," declaring that there were many of them in the county. This was a great honour to put upon me; but I could not help feeling, that if this said Rector had preached the Gospel to his people, they would never have gone to the expense of making such provision for themselves.

CHAPTER XXII.

Great Yarmouth.

1864–70.

AS the summer advanced our barn congregations diminished on the week-day evenings, the people being busy in their gardens and fields. Having received various invitations from the sea coast of Norfolk, I accepted one from Great Yarmouth. Here I commenced operations by preaching on the beach, and at the close of the address we retired to the Seamen's Chapel to draw in the net.

The missionary of this place, W. Jones, was a very devoted man, and a great help to me. At one of these open-air services, I directed the attention of my audience to a steamer which was passing in the offing; and from this I was led on to speak of an imaginary vessel going along with passengers on her deck. I particularly described three kinds, and bade the people consider each one for himself, or herself, and see to which class he or she belonged. "If the cap fits," I said, "put it on!"

"First, behold a man in chains, fettered, manacled, and guarded by a warder. He is on his way to prison and to punishment, and he knows it. See him hastily look over his shoulder with dread, as the ship nears the quay at which she is to touch. Sure enough, there is a mysterious black carriage without windows waiting there.

"Next to him is a gentleman, who is perfectly indifferent to everybody and everything around him. Whether the vessel is far from or near the end of her voyage, he does not care; for he is absorbed in his newspaper, thinking of nothing but the news and the passing events of the day.

"The third is a man standing in the bows of the ship, straining his eyes to recognize some people on the shore. Presently he sees them, and begins to wave his handkerchief to draw their attention to himself.

"Now," I said, "there are some in this assembly who are like the first division of these passengers I have described. They know that they are guilty sinners, and that if they die as they are they are sure to perish. They dread death; for it will deliver them to the officer of justice, who will cast them into prison, whence there is no escape.

"Others there are whose whole soul and life are taken up with earthly things; they care for nothing but the business and amusements of the world. They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; they love the world; and the love of the Father, who sent His Son to die for them, is not in them.

"Lastly, there are those whose thoughts are already in heaven. They have a home and friends 'over there,' and their Saviour is there also. They have turned their backs on the world and worldly things: and their faces are towards the heavenly Zion. In heart and mind they are already there. Death has no terror for such people, because all it can do is to open the gate of this glorious life to them. In the midst of death they are in life! How different from those who, surrounded as they are with all the privileges of eternal life and glory, prefer to remain in death!

"Observe, some dread; some do not care; and others look forward with joy to the end of their journey.

"Dear friends, to which of these three classes do you belong? Judge yourselves, and come to the meeting for prayer. Remember that Christ died for all, and rose again, that henceforth we should not live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died and rose again." We adjourned as usual to the room for prayer and inquiry.

At the close of the meeting a gentleman came forward and invited me to his house. In the course of conversation he told me that he had been awakened by the story of the steamer, and particularly by what I had said of the gentleman who was absorbed in the newspaper. He did not say much about his conversion; but every one could see that he was a changed man. He took great interest in the services, and from this time his was the house in which I was received; and he, his wife, and daughter the kind friends who entertained me and other evangelists. He arranged the meetings, took the Corn Hall, the Town Hall, or the Theatre, and made himself responsible for all the expenses.

One evening, in the Corn Hall, I noticed a gentleman standing at the end of the room, who was known to me as the cousin of a happy Christian neighbour living three miles from Buckenham. I observed that he remained for the after-meeting, so I went towards him; but he quickly made for the door, and disappeared.

On my way back to the kind friends with whom I was staying, I found him walking thoughtfully by my side. He said, "You know my cousin William, do you not?"

"Yes, indeed I do," I replied; for every remembrance of him made, and still makes, me glad.

"He is become serious, I hear."

"Oh, dear no, not at all. Serious! why he is as happy as can be; I saw him to-day looking as radiant as ever."

"Yes! yes! you know what I mean; he has become religious."

"No, indeed; you are misinformed again; he used to be something like that:—but he is converted; he is a spiritual man now. Anybody can make himself religious; but no one can convert himself. A Jew, a Mahometan, a Roman Catholic, or a Hindoo can be religious."

"Yes, yes, I understand what you mean: I suppose he will die soon?"

"Die!" I screamed; "what for? I hope not; why?"

"Oh," he replied thoughtfully, "I always observe that when men get to be like him, they soon go off."

"God saves us to live," I said, "not to die; to live for Him and His glory—and that is what your cousin William is aiming at. He 'shall not die, but live; and declare the works of the Lord'" (Ps. cxviii. 17).

Then I turned upon him, and recommended that whether he died or lived, he should give his heart to God; but I fear my words failed to make any impression.

I could not help pondering over this man's three mistakes, and thinking how common they are in the world. Perhaps they arise from the solemn and dejected looks of some Christians, who are not so happy as they should be. Serious—religious—going to die.

I am happy to say, that the cousin William never encouraged such a dismal and erroneous line of thought. On the contrary, he testifies to this day, with a beaming countenance and a happy heart, in a manner to recommend His Master. He, together with other members of his family, continues to labour with much success and blessing. To give an account of the Lord's work by them would require a book of itself.

The Corn Hall was continually so crowded, and the air often so oppressive, that we longed for the use of the theatre. On making application for it, we were refused, and told that "the regular performers" were coming, as if we were only irregular performers. However, on one occasion we gained our point, and obtained admission to this dark, dirty, dingy place. Bills were displayed all over the town to announce the fact, that Rev. W. Haslam would preach at the theatre; "no collection."

This commodious place was thronged to excess with persons of all classes. It was a novel thing in that far off eastern county to have preaching in a theatre; so it created a great sensation. Some of the people said, that they had heard of "actors becoming clergymen; but never before of a clergyman going on the stage."

I preached to the dense crowd that filled the place above, below, and around, also on the stage where I stood, from the text, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3). I afterwards published this address in a tract called "The Great Salvation," which remains as a memento of that one occasion on which I was permitted to be "a performer" in the theatre.

I testified that this salvation is freely offered by God, though it is neglected by too many. This very place, I said, will be a witness against multitudes, who prefer it and its empty and often sinful pleasures to the Word of God and the house of God. I went on to explain how this great salvation is full, free, and present.

1. It is full as God's love could make it.

2. It is free as the air we breathe. But we must each one accept it for himself, even as we inhale the air, if we would have the benefit.

3. It is a present salvation, or nothing; for what is it to me, with all its reality and greatness, if I am not now saved?

We had a very glorious time; the Lord Himself vouchsafed His manifested Presence in that place, and many souls were saved. There was much excitement in the town. Some of the people were angry that their theatre was used for such a purpose; some were quite ashamed; and others rejoiced.

At another time, when I visited Great Yarmouth, I stood out of doors to speak, under the lee of the Sailors' Home; as it was too windy on the beach. Amongst the crowds assembled, there were a few who had filled their pockets with paper balls containing flour. From time to time they amused themselves by pelting me with the same. Many of the shots missed their mark; but those that did strike, opened, and covered me with whiteness. In this plight I went on with my address, and subsequently proceeded to the after-meeting. While there I observed a notorious character who went by the name of "Ned the Pilot." He stood in front opposite the platform, holding his straw hat in both hands. I came down to him and said, "I am glad to see you here. Do you wish to give your heart to God?"

"No, I don't," was his reply.

"Why did you come then?"

"I didn't come at all; they ladies brought me."

"They wish you well," I said.

"I don't want it—I don't like such places. I likes a public-house a deal better; and they sings there too a sight better than you do!"

"I like your candour, my good man; and quite believe that you do like a public-house better than this place. It is honest of you to say so. But, do you know that you will be lost for ever, if that is your line?"

"I don't care for that either."

"Now," I said, "I do not believe you." So saying, I took his hand and drew it towards the gaslight. He pulled it back. "What," I continued, "you care for that little flame! If you cannot bear your hand in that, how do you think you will bear with body and soul in the fire that never shall be quenched?"

He made no reply; so I continued, "You had far better take my advice and yield yourself to God." He began to back into the crowd; and I followed him, speaking kindly about the love of God and His unwillingness that any sinner should die in his sins. He went away without making any manifest surrender, or speaking a word.

A fortnight afterwards when I was preaching at another part of the shore I saw him again. After the address was over our eyes met, and he beckoned me to him. He asked whether I remembered him? "Yes," I replied, "I do. And do you remember what I said to you?"

"Oh yes, I can mind that."

"What is the good of minding it, if you do not do what I tell you?"

"I have done it," he said triumphantly.

"Thank God!" I exclaimed involuntarily, "I am glad to hear it. What have you done?"

"I've given up the drink, and the bad words too." Then he stopped and looked at me as if expecting my praise.

"Well," I said, "that is a very good beginning—what else have you done? Have you given your heart to God?"

"That'll all come in due time."

"Ned," I replied, "you have done very well as far as you have gone: but you should not have stopped there; you ought to have asked the Lord to forgive you the past."

He did not seem satisfied; so I continued, "You have turned over a new leaf instead of turning back the old ones, and getting them washed in the blood which has been shed to put away sins."

"Oh," he replied, "you don't know me: you think I'll go back—not a bit of it! Ask any one—they'll tell you about Ned the Pilot: when I makes up my mind, the thing is done."

"But, have you asked your master's leave?"

"Master," he repeated, drawing himself up, "I never had a master in my life!"

"I thought so; you look like that. But is not the devil your master? Have you not served him all your life? You should know, Ned, that unforgiven sins are a chain by which you are bound; and until that chain is broken you are in the devil's power. He can trip you up, and break your resolutions whenever he likes."

"You don't encourage a fellow a bit," he said sullenly, and went away.

Three or four weeks after this I saw him in a village thirty miles in the country, and followed him to see where he was going. He turned into a public-house, and I went in after him. "What, Ned," I said, "is that you?"

"Yes," he replied quietly, "it is me. But I'm not a come here to drink; I'm come to inquire for you!"

"For me, indeed! A likely place to find me!"

"That is so," said Ned; "I've a been to yer house this morning, and they told me where ye were, so I came along to find ye."

"Well, come out of this place, and tell me what is the matter. Have you been at the drink again?"

"Yes, that's it; I gave an old friend a treat yesterday, and took a sip myself, and then another. After that it was all up: I got very bad; and when the men laughed at me, I swore at them."

He was very dejected, so I took him to the house where I was staying, to have a longer talk with him; then to a meeting in the afternoon, and to another in the evening. The poor man was in great trouble; but could not find peace. All night long he groaned and prayed, without receiving any answer. At length in the morning the light of God's pardoning love broke in upon his soul, and he rejoiced in the forgiveness of his sins. From that time he came out as one of the most decided champions for the truth, so far as he knew it. He attended my meetings regularly, and seldom came alone.

One evening, instead of looking as radiant as usual, I saw him crying, and apparently in great distress.

"What is the matter?" I inquired; "have you been at the drink again?"

"Oh no, no, that's not it—but I taught some young men to drink and swear; and five of them went down yesterday—they were too drunk to manage their boat. The last that was heard of them, was cursing one another for upsetting it—they're all lost. Oh dear, it's awful to think on. I couldn't unteach them again."

This is a solemn truth. We cannot unteach!

A lady, who had been an active worker in her district, came to the Corn Hall meetings without a suspicion that she was unconverted. She knew the *word* of the Spirit, and for that reason supposed that she knew the *work* of the Spirit also. She was soon awakened, and when her eyes were opened, she was amazed and ashamed: she said that she had been passing for a Christian when she was not one, and had allowed her friends to think her real, when she was all the time nothing but a sham. She felt as if she deserved to be called after and pelted in the street for her deception.

God—who awakens, not to upbraid but to convert—saved her, and made her in His hand a faithful witness of the Gospel of salvation. Among other things, it came into her mind to establish a refuge for outcast boys after the plan of Dr. Barnardo's Home in London. With indefatigable zeal she laboured at this good work, and not without success. The boys were certainly a troublesome crew: some made a favour of studying; and some ran away. One little fellow who was disposed to remain loyal to the Home, was tempted by some of the outside boys to "run." "No," he said, "I won't." They taunted him by saying, "You can't go to the the-a-tre now." "No," replied the other, "but the the-a-tre ain't everything." He stood firm; and so has the Home for the last eighteen years, and been the means of blessing to many.

The Yarmouth meetings were not without fruitful results. Souls were saved, backsliders restored, and believers encouraged to devote themselves to the Lord's service.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Lowestoft.

1864–70.

THE work in the county of Norfolk spread into Suffolk also, and has been going on there more or less ever since. A gentleman, who lived near Lowestoft, was deeply interested in the new Bethel, or Seamen's Church, which was just being completed. He came to invite me to speak at the opening. This I agreed to do with pleasure, and on the day appointed put in my appearance. There was a dense crowd of people inside, and numbers outside who could not obtain admission.

Upon this occasion I took for my subject "the Presence of God," which I said was necessary for the success and blessing of every undertaking. I endeavoured to show that this Presence was already offered, and that God was ever a God nigh at hand and not afar off: that He was always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give than we to ask. We invoke his Presence, not because He is not present, but because He has promised to be with us, and promise is the true basis of prayer. But, I went on to say, people through their "*ifs*" and unbelief miss the blessing.

I called attention to Jacob and his dream, as recorded in Genesis xxviii., more especially to the fact of God's free offer to be his God (*v.* 15); to be with him; and to keep him. As He blessed Abraham and Isaac, so God offered to bless him, and make him a blessing. Instead of rejoicing and thanking God, Jacob was afraid, and said, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (*v.* 17). Whereas, it was indeed neither the gate nor the house; but the very Presence of God, though he did not realize it.

We read that he "took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it, and he called the name of that place Bethel. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on . . . *then* shall the Lord be my God!" (*verses* 18–21). Thus Jacob ignored God's offer, and said, "*If* Thou wilt give me these things, Thou shalt be my God." In like manner, people forego their privileges by making God's gift to them, which has been freely given for Christ's sake, depend upon some conditions of their own making. Like Jacob, too many will not trust where they cannot trace, little thinking that trusting begins where tracing ceases. Too often people go to church, or Bethel, as the case may be; and they suppose that if they *feel* God's Presence, He is there; whereas, *He is there*, whether they feel it or not. Like the woman of Samaria, they go to the well to draw water, and quench their thirst; but they do not see or know the Prince of Glory, who is sitting at the well, and who can give them living water, which shall be in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Jacob's vision was but a dream, and the ladder merely a figure; but we have the reality in Christ. He is Himself here, and the angels of God are ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. He is the very ladder set up on the earth whose top reaches to heaven. His God and ours—His Father and our Father—says to us, "I am with thee to keep thee, whithersoever thou goest." Do we believe in this real Presence of God and Christ? He is here, and says to each one of us assembled in this building, "What wouldest thou?"

It was a time of spiritual baptism and refreshment to living souls, and of life to many who came there dead in trespasses and sins. We had three services that day—thus the Bethel was opened. It has since been a place of spiritual blessing every month, and I may even venture to say every week, for the last eighteen years. Besides this, many fishermen and sailors have gone forth from the place carrying their joyful testimony to various and distant places.

The Rector of Lowestoft called on the friend who invited me and asked him, "What is a Bethel? Is it a church or a chapel?"

"Neither; it is a Bethel. And I should say more of a church than a chapel, for we had a real Rector to open it."

"So it appears," was the reply.

Whether he was satisfied with the answer or not, I do not know; but obtaining my address he wrote me a very characteristic note on a scrap of paper, and in a little crabby hand as follows:—

"DEAR SIR,—Will you preach in my church?
"Yours truly."

I replied—

"DEAR SIR,—When you ask me, if I can.
"Yours truly,
"W. HASLAM."

After several letters in this laconic style, we agreed upon a certain Thursday. I duly went, and preached in a large church in the town. My name was so notorious that the building was filled in every part. After the service we went to the Rector's house to supper, when that gentleman expressed himself as much pleased with the sermon, and asked many questions about the work of God in which I was engaged. Then he came and sat on the floor near my chair, and said, "Have you a pocket-book?" On producing this article, he asked whether he might look over my engagements. Turning over a few leaves of the book, he marked with his pencil a certain Sunday and the three following days, saying, "I want you here for this time; I will provide for your work at home—at least for the Sunday."

I consented to this proposal, and when the time arrived preached three times on the Sunday. On Monday evening we had, in addition to the local congregation, a gathering of clergy, who had been invited by the Rector to attend a conference at his house the next day.

The following morning these, with others who had just arrived by train, met together in the dining-room at the Rector's house. The Rector opened the conference with prayer and a short address, in which he proposed a question that was pressing on his mind, namely, "Why is there so much Gospel preaching, and so little result?"

The "revarands" were arranged round the room. I was placed at the end opposite to the chairman, so that all those on his left hand were asked to answer the question before it came to me. It would certainly have been very amusing, if it had not been very sad, to hear the various excuses which were made for the want of success. It was God's fault, on the score of His sovereignty: or it was the people's fault; they were so indifferent, sceptical, self-righteous, hardened: or, it was the devil's, he was so busy. One man said, "How can there be any blessing if one's wife and daughters come to church dressed in ——?" and then he motioned with his hands as if he referred to an outspreading crinoline (the fashion in those days). This was funny, to be sure, but, by no means satisfactory. Some said better things; but none touched the point as far as I knew anything about it.

When the question reached me, I said, that besides the three reasons given by the Lord in the parable of the Sower for want of success, and which, it will be observed, are faults of the hearers, there are four on our side as accredited preachers of the Gospel, each of which would go far to make our ministry effectual; but several of them together would be more than enough to hinder it. These four hindrances, I said, you will find specified in Acts xxvi., 16th and 18th verses respectively.

1. When a man does not begin by opening the eyes of the blind.

2. When he does not turn from darkness to light those whose eyes are opened.

3. When he does not bring such awakened and anxious ones from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins.

4. Lastly, when he is not a witness, as well as a minister of the Gospel.

One of the company muttered something about "presumption—arrogance!" Another said, "It is blasphemy," and so on. But the Rector asked that I might be heard, and I begged to be allowed a few minutes to explain each of my points.

In order to secure results, I said—

1. We must work in the line of the operation of the Holy Spirit, whose primary work is to convince of sin: we must aim at bringing the sinner to see that he is dead in trespasses and sins, that he is lost *now*. Men by nature are blind to the fact. This is opening of the eyes.

2. When a sinner is awakened, and consequently is anxious about his soul, we must show him that it is not by works of his—not by prayers, or tears, or repentance—but only by faith in the finished work of Christ, that he can possibly have salvation. This is turning him from darkness to light.

3. When the anxious one assents to all this, is willing to believe, and yet does not thank God because he "cannot feel," or for other reasons (this is the work of Satan to detain him), we should bring him into God's presence with thanksgiving and praise for forgiveness of sins, urging him to thank God for what Christ did for him, rather than for feelings. Manifestly our ministry is a failure, if it does not produce this result.

4. All this, or indeed any of it, cannot be done with reality if we have not ourselves gone over the ground experimentally. If we are not witnesses of the fact, how can we testify? If we have not received salvation, how can we preach it? or how can we minister about forgiveness, if we are strangers to the experience? We read of some (Acts xix.) who took on themselves to call over those who had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, "We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth." There were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, who did so; and the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? and the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them." My reverend listeners would not hear any more. So the morning sitting was concluded, though somewhat abruptly.

It was announced that, "after luncheon, others would give their testimony on this most important subject, and one so interesting to us all."

In the afternoon we re-assembled to hear further answers to the question. Among those who spoke, there were four or five clergymen who, it would appear, were working for the Lord with some success; but they had a happier way of telling their story than I, and therefore were listened to and even approved.

In the evening some one else preached, and the conference concluded; but according to promise I remained another day. I did not like these conflicts with the brethren; but I have every reason to believe that gathering was not without good results. It set some thinking, and encouraged others who were working to go on more earnestly.

One clergyman from the country, who had been there, wrote soon after to offer me a visit for a week, that he might see the work for himself. I gladly welcomed him, and took him with me to a Corn Hall meeting in Yarmouth, where I was engaged to preach that evening.

He happened to know the Vicar of the place, and therefore, as he said, sat in misery all the time, for fear the door should open, and that the Vicar would walk in and find him there. This quite spoiled that meeting for him. The next evening I took him to a barn meeting, where he was not disturbed by such fears; but he complained that he had not received the benefit he expected there. I told him, that in order to experience the power of a stream he should be in it, and not on the bank—that he should take part in the proceedings.

The following evening I asked him to pray; this he did very well. Then I called upon him to say a few words to the people. He complied with this request also, and came back better satisfied, but had not yet worked in the after-meeting.

On the fourth evening he learned by experience how to lead a soul to Christ to receive forgiveness of sins; and the next day he worked with interest as well as energy. He returned home on Saturday, rejoicing on the mountain-top, and told his wife that he felt as if he had never been converted before. From this time he began to work in earnest to win souls, and wondered how he could ever have been satisfied to go on so long without manifest result.

He was abused for his efforts of course, and all the more so, when he invited me to come over and help him. Now, he was not dismayed by opposition, and in his quiet way continued working for several years.

From this place in Suffolk I went to others; also to the capital town of the county, Ipswich. Here I had the honour of a church to preach in, and found a dear brother who was counted as black a sheep as myself. Ever since, and up to the present time, the Lord has continued to give me fruit in Ipswich and its neighbourhood.

In another part of this county, a gentleman was urged by a friend from Norfolk to open his coach-house, as he himself had done, for preaching to his tenants and neighbours. He did so, and commenced by reading a sermon to the people on Sunday evenings, there being no service in the church at that time. I could not give him a Sunday as he wished, but went on Tuesday instead.

Before the meeting I sounded him, in order to find out if he had an after-meeting—whether he ever pulled up the net. "No," he said, he did not know about that: he had never heard of such a thing. At the service he and a neighbouring squire, who had come to meet me, sat together watching my proceedings. It pleased God to give me some souls that night, which rather surprised these two Christians.

In the morning they started out early before the men went to work, to see those who professed to have found peace. They saw them, and heard of others also who had been awakened. My cautious friend wondered whereunto this would grow, and hoped that I would come and see him again in three months' time.

"Three months!" I exclaimed; "why, I ought to be here again next week."

It was so, for he summoned me to come back. When he met me at the station, he said with emotion, "Of course no one can catch fish if he does not pull up the net. I pulled it up last night, and there were six souls in it. Glory be to God!"

The work was fairly and well begun here, and has gone on with more or less energy up to the present time.

Once when I was expected, it was supposed that the coach-house would not hold the people, though a temporary gallery had been constructed to meet the difficulty. My friend and his men were crossing a field to clear out a barn, when they met the Vicar of the parish, who said, "You may have the church; yes, by all means have the church."

The news spread rapidly that Mr. Haslam would preach at the parish church. The Vicar was terrified at the commotion this caused; more so, with the crowd which assembled; but most of all, by the letters he received from some of his brethren. We had the use of his church for that visit, it is true; but we did not gain him, or his fabric, after that occasion.

At the time of which I am writing, there was a family in the neighbourhood who were severely afflicted with scarlet fever. The children were taken ill one after another. One little one died, and two others were so dangerously ill that it was uncertain which would go first. The parents were in great trouble about them, and the more so because they were not sure of their eternal safety. They prayed earnestly that the girls might be saved, if they were not; or if they were, that they might give some testimony to that effect.

At midnight when the parents entered the chamber of the eldest daughter, she said of her own accord, "Oh, mother! I have been thinking that I ought to have told you and father that I am converted. Don't be afraid if I die."

What joy this was to them! The mother eagerly asked her when she was saved.

"Don't you remember that Sunday afternoon when you spoke to me and A—— in the garden? She is converted too." This was the other daughter, who was lying ill in the next room. After a time the parents went to A——; but finding her asleep they returned to M——. It was not long before they saw that she was dying. She was quite aware of the fact, and very happy, rejoicing in the Lord. Thus she departed, leaving good and cheering testimony behind.

Having closed her eyes, the sorrowing yet grateful parents went to watch by the bedside of the other sick one. Presently she awoke, and seeing her mother was there she said, "Oh, dear mother, I do not know why I never told you that M—— and I are converted. That Sunday when you spoke to us about Jesus, we both found peace. I am not afraid to die—I do so want to go away to heaven."

Her father gently suggested that she should wait the Lord's time; but she replied, "What if He does not take me *now*? I do want to go now!"

He answered, "You must not be so wilful or impatient about it; I wish you were more submissive to God's will."

She said no more, and soon fell asleep again. In an hour or two she woke up with a start and said, "Oh, mother! what do you think? I have seen M——" (she had not yet been told that her sister was dead); "I thought I was dying, and just going into heaven—the bright gate was open; and who do you think came out of it to meet me? It was M——, looking so bright and happy, and dressed in a beautiful white robe, with a lovely wreath on her head. She came running up to me, and said, 'Oh, A——, I am so sorry. You must go back: you are so wilful, you cannot come yet.'"

This dear child did not die, but recovered from that time, and is still pressing on her way to the celestial gate, with her face thitherward, taking all she can with her.

After this the father himself was taken ill, and during his illness, which was very severe, he also had a wonderful vision, which had a good and rousing effect upon his soul. The affliction passed, but not without leaving a lasting blessing upon the family.

Suffolk and Lowestoft are deeply impressed upon my memory for many blessings vouchsafed. When God manifests His presence with power, then places and subjects take hold of the heart, and compel the memory to retain them. Thus it is that I can never think of the beach of Lowestoft without remembering, not only the Bethel, but the Bible-readings on the sands. I do not forget my little band of willing labourers, who worked so bravely with their wooden spades, and who cheerfully made a broad pit with a bank all round for my company to sit upon. The sweetness of the words which we considered from time to time, and the thrilling sensation when God applied them to us by His power and presence, are indelibly fixed upon my mind. I often meet people in my journeys, even now, who say, "Do you remember Lowestoft beach?"

CHAPTER XXIV.

Hassingham.

1864–70.

THIS is the name of the parish, with its pretty thatched-roofed church, which was appended to the Rectory of Buckenham. It is an unpretending place, and passing by you would think nothing ever happens there. Moreover, you have to go out of the way to pass it at all, through narrow and bye lanes, bordering on the marshes. Even here some eventful things did occur; for God is no respecter of persons or places either. Anywhere, if there is a soul to pray, there is a God to answer; and everywhere where the gospel is preached, it is the savour of life unto life, or the savour of death unto death.

We must pass over several cases of conversion in silence, because they are similar in character to others which have been recorded elsewhere. I will tell here of a few, which I trust may be both interesting and instructive.

My parish clerk was a fair specimen of the Norfolk peasantry! His talk was peculiar to his native county, and his reading of the responses just like his talk. We could not help smiling in church at his manner of reading till we became used to it. Then, strange to say, we did not notice it at all, except, indeed, when he altogether miscalled his words and conveyed extraneous thoughts to the mind. For instance, when he innocently declared that he "had become *a lion* among his mother's children," instead of "an alien," as it is in the Psalms; or when he said, "There goes *that great lieutenant*, whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein,"—meaning "there goes that great leviathan." Things of this kind were too striking to be unnoticed. When I told him of his mistakes, he pleaded that it all meant the same thing; the people knew his meaning; and besides which, he had so read the words all his life.

This man remained unmoved for more than three years, under all the preaching he heard, notwithstanding that the

Lord was accompanying the Word with signs following to many souls. Still he went on in the even tenor of his routine, as if sermons were not intended for officials, but only for the congregation. However, the Gospel penetrated at last even to this clerk.

One morning I was speaking of the hardness of King Ahab's heart, how God had made him a king, and he took it as a matter of course; had prospered him, and he gave no thanks; had sent him adversity, and he remained untouched. Then after three years and a half of drought, when the sufferings of the people and cattle were great, instead of humbling himself under God's hand, he was angry with Elijah. Even after the prophet brought down fire from heaven to prove that the Lord He is God, the king continued as sullen as ever. From that time God gave him up, and taking off His hand of affliction, sent abundance of rain and prosperity. For all this the king went on as usual, and at the instigation of his wife threatened to put Elijah to death. "This is the way," I added, "that people who occupy positions of privilege get hardened if they do not acknowledge God, and are not thankful; or, when He sends affliction, if they do not melt under it, and bend before Him."

I little thought that my clerk was writhing under this sermon, for to me he seemed to be sitting and thinking of nothing as usual; yet all the time his soul was being stirred "inside of him," as he termed it. He said, that everybody in the church knew who I meant. "That there king was nothing. You were telling them all about me."

In the afternoon I had for my subject the death of Ahab, and described how he went up to take Ramoth Gilead, as if it already belonged to him. This Ramoth was one of the cities to which the manslayer might flee for refuge; but because Ahab was a king, he thought he would *take it* by force, instead of *fleeing to it*.

In like manner, people who ought to flee to Christ for refuge as sinners, think they can take heaven when they please: but an arrow shot at a venture will reach them; their sin is sure to find them out. So the arrow shot at a venture found King Ahab, and brought him down to death.

This discourse quite settled the clerk. He gave up that afternoon, and received salvation—not by *taking* Ramoth Gilead, but by *fleeing* to it as a guilty one. He had hitherto regarded himself as a good clerk, and on the whole a very exemplary man, kind to everybody, and regular in his duty; and for these things he thought of course he would go to heaven. It therefore startled him to find that he must come as a sinner for salvation. This he was enabled to do, and became a happy and consistent character, though not so advanced and enlightened as I should have wished.

Some people do not appear to have capacity for anything beyond "conwarsion:" they think that this is the highest height of salvation instead of the very lowest, being, as it really is, only the threshold of the door, and merely the beginning of the way to eternal life.

The last time I saw this dear man he was, as he said, "very sadly," and a helpless sufferer in bed with rheumatism; but he was rejoicing in the Lord, and thanked God that ever I had been to Hassingham. Bidding me goodbye, he said, "We shall meet in heaven, maister; I'm going along there, that I am, thanks be."

People used readily to come to Hassingham Church, although the service commenced as early as ten o'clock in the morning. Some of them liked the "Revarand:" and some did not care much for him; for they had heard "far better than he!" and so on. My object, however, was not to catch their approbation, but themselves, and that in spite of disapprobation, if it might be so granted.

Among others there came a lively, chatty woman, who was much occupied all the week with her family, her house, and her business. After listening to my preaching for several Sundays she arrived at the conclusion that I intended to "upset everything," and said, she "could see with half an eye that things were not to go on as they used to be." "No," she said; "if I take his meaning, we must be downright saints, all ready for heaven at any moment, or else perish." She thought there should be "moderation in everything, particularly in religion."

One day, in spite of her antagonism, the Lord brought home the Word very closely to her. I really thought she was going to yield. She surprised us also by coming to the afternoon service on Sunday, and more so by attending several meetings on the week-day evenings. I began to hope she would be saved; but to my sorrow she became more and more irregular, even on Sundays, and then ceased coming altogether. She always justified her absence as if her conscience was not easy. This is how people go back, in spite of good impressions and resolutions, if they do not definitely yield themselves to God.

It so happened that while she was in this state of mind a governess was selected for our little school, before I was ready to receive her. I went to this woman to ask whether she could accommodate her. To this she readily assented, and went to the station to meet her lodger on the Saturday.

In course of conversation she found out that the new governess was what she called "quite innicent," and "did not know nothing about conwarsion." "You will see," she said, "he'll take and cut you up, and turn yer inside out—You'll hear about hell and damnation; and woe betide ye, if ye don't give in. You'll have to be convarted, right off."

The poor young woman was much frightened at the prospect, for she could not imagine what was to happen, or what was to be done to her. She had "never heard about conversion for church people."

"It is time ye did then," answered the woman. "Don't ye know that it's impossible for any one to get to heaven without it, or even to be a Christian without it?"

The governess said, "she had been made a Christian when she was baptized, and that she had been confirmed too."

"Oh, you are an innicent!" exclaimed the woman.

"Well," the girl replied, "I do not know of anything more. I am a regular communicant."

"Why, poor child, he'll take and hang yer up over the fire of hell, and make yer cry out and promise to be conwarted. You'll have to do that, be sure you will."

"Mr. Haslam did not look to me a man like that; he was so cheerful and kind. I can scarcely believe all this about him."

"Oh," replied the woman, "you don't know."

Evidently she had passed through some searchings of heart, and had come out on the wrong side.*

What with the strange place, and such tremendous horrors awaiting her, the poor schoolmistress did not sleep much that night. In the morning, her courage had well nigh failed, and she was disposed to stay away from church.

"What! not go to church!" exclaimed the woman; "why, the 'Revarand' will be down here after you in a crack, and find me in all this ere mess. No, you far better go with good pluck; he can't kill you, ye know. He will expect you at the school at half-past nine."

She bustled about to get the children ready, and then sent them along with the governess, saying, "They'll show you the way; don't be afraid."

In due form and time the school was opened; and after that, there was the service in church. During the sermon, the little heart of the governess began to tremble, yet she could not tell why. There was nothing terrible in the discourse, or in the manner of the preacher. The sermon was about the double proclamation. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) "Through this Man (Christ Jesus) is preached unto you (or proclaimed as by a herald) the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe (that is, all whose sins are pardoned) are justified from all things,"—or accounted righteous before God for Christ's sake. There is pardon, and also justification, for the sinner through Jesus Christ. The conclusion was a solemn appeal to all present to accept the terms offered; together with a warning to those who neglected to do so. In order to obtain pardon and life, individuals were urged to yield themselves to God as rebels under sentence of death. It was announced that the subject of Justification, as distinct from pardon, though connected with it, would be considered in the afternoon.

The schoolmistress cried very much, and remained a long time on her knees after the sermon. She said, that she did not know how she felt. The Gospel plan of salvation was all new to her; she had never heard it before. Thank God, it was "good news" to her soul.

She returned to her lodging, an hour after time, rejoicing in the forgiveness of her sins. When she arrived, the woman of the house said, "There you are! Did not I tell ye that ye would be convarted—turned inside out—upside down —or 'right side up,' they call it at the Rectory?"

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* It is suggested that this woman's case is an illustration of Hebrews vi. 4–8.

The woman was much agitated; and the more so when the governess said, "Whatever they call it, I thank God that I went to church this morning: my sins are pardoned."

"Ha, ha," laughed the woman, "that is what they tell you. I don't belave a word on't,—it's all moonshine, my dear—don't you belave it; I thought you had more sense than that!"

Now it was the woman's turn to be frightened; and her children were crying, which made her testy and sharp. Hastening the dinner she said, "It's time you were gone; the other church is a mile off!"

The governess asked if she would not go with them. "I go! dear no!" she replied, "I've quite given up going this long time. That 'Revarand' makes me feel so uncomfortable; I don't know what to make of him; I've not got over what I heard last yet." Thus this woman continued to refuse the Gospel, or even to hear it.

Time passed on, till one bright summer Sunday in June we were all assembled in church, when suddenly the heavens were darkened with clouds, and a loud clap of thunder announced a storm of no small energy. It lasted for more than an hour, pouring out a deluge of rain in large drops. While the congregation was detained in church, we sang hymns, looking out now and then to see whether the clouds were breaking.

As I was standing at the door, I heard the step of some one in pattens clamping along. It was our friend coming in her week-day clothes with a large umbrella to fetch her two children. When she re-passed, carrying her two girls in her arms, and holding the umbrella over them, I said, "There you are; I wish you cared as much for your soul, as you do for the children's clothes."

"Ah, well!" she replied, "don't say any more. I'll come next Sunday; that I will."

Two days after this, I was called up in haste, in the middle of the night, to go to a dying person. I went immediately, and found it was this same woman, doubled up with pain. She threw herself about with great violence as she writhed in the paroxysm of her agony. Upon seeing me she evidently was reminded of prayer, and at once began to plead for mercy for her soul. Her prayer was distracted; and what with fear for her soul, and groaning in her bodily distress, she was like one beside herself. It took no less than six women to hold her down. Crying, struggling, and praying by turns, she passed away. It was a most awful thing to witness that fight for life, and that unavailing effort to escape. She was dying without hope; and what aggravated her distress was, that she knew it. It was a solemn case of refusing God, and being refused by Him.

Before sunrise on the Wednesday she was gone, and her poor body laid out for its last resting-place. Her face looked so calm and placid that it was difficult to realize the frantic and terrible scene we had witnessed an hour or two before. Neighbours came that day, and said, "She looks so peaceful and happy; surely she must be in heaven."

When it comes to this touching point how many there are who side with men rather than with God. They would sooner believe that unconverted people go to heaven than that God's Word is true. Notwithstanding this, her death, for the time at least, struck a blow to many careless ones; and her funeral was expected to be one of great interest. Her friends asked me to allow it to take place on Sunday, and one person suggested that I might "improve the occasion;" but, he added, "Do not say she is *lost*: it cannot do any good."

"On the other hand," I replied, "can it do any good to the unsaved, to let them suppose that such an open and determined rejecter of the gospel has gone to heaven?"

At the service, I was reminded forcibly of her words, "Don't say any more; I'll be here next Sunday." I told the people of it, and said, "Here she is, to be sure; but it is only her poor body: and if her soul could send you a message now, it would be, 'Do not come to this place of torment!'"

There was a little angry feeling at first; but afterwards there came a melting power of the Spirit, and many wept. It is useless to rebel against God, for He willeth not the death of the sinners; but would far rather that they should yield themselves to Him and be saved. "Oh that they were wise, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deut. xxxii. 29).

There were three farmers in this parish; and though it is said, that such people are seldom converted, I am thankful to say all these were decidedly turned to the Lord, and so were their families also.

The first began by being very angry at the revival. He said, "his son had gone out of his mind; that he and the ploughman were singing hymns all day, and out at meetings all night." He told his son that he was a fool, and the laughing-stock of the Norwich hill, a place where the farmers congregated on market-days.

"I was a greater fool once, father," replied the young man.

"Pray, when was that?"

"When I was unconverted, and going to hell."

"You come to teach me, at my time of life!" said the indignant father. "Why, I heard hundreds of sermons before you was born."

"I only wish you had obeyed one of them, father. The Scripture says, 'Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only'" (James i. 22).

The poor man was much irritated; and still more so when his second son was saved, and then his wife and daughter. At last he too was brought in; and soon after came to a barn meeting, where he publicly thanked God for saving his soul, and told me never to mind opposition. He was, he said, as sincere in his opposition once, as he now was in bearing testimony; but he added, "I was as dark as a hedge, and did not know what I was talking about. I thank God for bringing salvation to me, and to my house."

Another farmer, who was a shy man, and had kept his convictions to himself, surprised me one day by bursting into tears, and saying he could hold out no longer. After this, one morning he called his labourers together before they went to work, and asked them to thank God with him for having saved his soul. He then begged of them to meet him at that hour every morning for prayer. One of the labourers said, "It brought tears to my eyes to hear maister speak; it was as good as a sermon, and a deal better than many on 'em."

Another farmer came to church regularly for some time; but I could not get a word from him. One day I heard that he had been speaking of me to a friend of his at Yarmouth. He told him that I was a man who had set out for heaven myself, and "wanted to put them all along" with me, and that he "was minded to go too!"

I went after him forthwith, and it was not long before he gave his heart to God. He was a man of few words; but when he did say anything, it was to the point, which showed that he was a thoughtful man. In course of time he was taken ill of a very painful disease, and suffered much, but he bore it with great patience.

On one occasion, when I was visiting him, I asked, as he was sitting by the fire, "Do you have much pain now?" He replied calmly, "Yes, I had a great deal last night; but I was just thinking how good the dear Lord is. He says, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world' (John xvi. 33). He puts the good cheer, do yer see, on the top of the tribulation."

This dear man died in peace, and shortly after his son followed him, both happy in the Lord.

It is with deep thankfulness I record, that there was not a house in this parish where souls were not saved; and in some of them every member of the family.

CHAPTER XXV.

Visits to Kent.

1865–6.

BESIDES the journeys to Lowestoft, Ipswich, Yarmouth, and various other places in England, Scotland, and Ireland, I went, by urgent invitation, to Hythe in Kent. The Lord had put it into the heart of a good man there to engage the Town Hall for evangelistic services. He possessed marvellous faculty for organization and for marshalling forces and people. As to regularity, punctuality, and general order, these meetings were most exemplary.

My friend had much encouragement; but it was not without opposition and its accompanying disagreeables. I was in the thick of similar troubles at home; and, therefore, was able to sympathize with, and cheer him also.

One summer evening, when the windows of the hall were open, not only for air, but to give stray listeners in the street an opportunity to hear, we were greatly disturbed by noise, and in a novel way. A heavy cart, called in Norfolk by the expressive name "tumbril," was drawn backwards and forwards slowly over the stones for half an hour, in front of the hall, the driver ejaculating in a loud voice to his horse all the time, especially when he was turning round. It was very distracting, as doubtless it was intended to be; even more so than had been the organ, the grinder of which had been paid on previous occasions for serenading the meetings, or the brass band either. I could not help taking encouragement from this interruption. It was so manifestly of the devil, that I urged the assembly to bear it patiently, and said, "You may now and then lose a few words of my address; but never mind that. You will surely see great things here for your good, and for the glory of God. Do not fear; the devil knows that a great door and effectual is opened, or he would not trouble himself to be such an adversary."

Time proved the truth of this statement, for much blessing was given, which also spread from here to Sandgate, Folkestone, Dover, and other places.

My friend, however, had to struggle single-handed for a long time against these difficulties. The Evangelists only came and went; but he had to abide and bear the brunt of the battle. It was hot and sharp every now and then, and came up like a tempest against the wind, that is, from most unexpected quarters.

Times are changed since those days, and the Gospel has more acceptance than it had. I do not suppose, however, that human nature is changed, or that the offence of the Cross has ceased; but it would appear that the devil has changed his tactics. Now, when Gospel preaching is more general, and light is spreading, Satan uses other means to hinder its acceptance. He says to many people, "It is quite true, you must be born again; you must be converted, or you will be lost; you must be pardoned before you die; there is no repentance or forgiveness in the grave." But he adds, "Do not be troubled, you will not die to-day; do not hurry—wisely take time to consider—procrastinate—wait to feel something—live in hope of being saved hereafter." Such are a few of his devices; and every one who is working for souls knows how sadly effectual they are.

Here, as in too many places at that time, the Vicar was opposed to the work; and instead of co-operating with it, and thanking God for it, he preached against the service in the Town Hall, and in every way used his influence to hinder people from attending. My friend was so disheartened by this, and also with the false doctrine that was taught, that he was disposed to give up going to church. I thought this a great pity, and urged him by all means to continue his attendance at the parish church. I said, "You will hear several chapters read from the Bible, besides three or four psalms, and some good prayers which were written by holy men many years ago, and have been in constant use ever since. My advice to you is, 'Go and worship God, and endure patiently what you hear from man; even this last may turn to profit.'" I recommended him to take notes of the sermon, and then compare the statements of the preacher with the words and teaching of Scripture.

He afterwards told me that he was much surprised how quickly the time passed while he took notes, and the otherwise tedious sermon became interesting. This was especially the case when some dogmas were propounded, which were very startling and diametrically opposed to the inspired Word.

One Monday my friend showed me two parallel columns of statements, the Vicar's and St. Paul's, which I must say presented a remarkable contrast — the traditions of the Fathers in contradiction to the Bible.

I said, "You should take that to the Vicar, or send it to him: he is an earnest man, and never hears any one but himself, and never sees any side of teaching but his own. It would be a real kindness to show him the other side. I am sure he is an honest man, and does not intentionally obscure the truth." My friend wrote, and I am sorry to say the Vicar did not take the letter in so good part as I had supposed.

The exercise of putting bad theology into good Scripture-teaching is certainly more profitable than complaining of bad sermons. But some of the converts, who had neither patience to take notes nor intelligence enough to compare them with the Bible, collected money, and came to ask my advice about building a chapel. "Oh, pray do not!" I said somewhat hastily, evidently to their great disappointment, for they thought they were doing a very laudable and self-denying thing, and had intended asking me to lay the foundation-stone! "There are churches and chapels enough at present," I said; "fill them first, and work amongst the various congregations. You will do yourselves more good by carrying life to them than by separating from them." They were scarcely persuaded, but said they would try.

Soon after I heard that a number of them had joined the Independent Chapel, and being a majority, they had voted the old minister out, giving him ten pounds to go. They then "called" a converted man to preach to them, for the edification of believers and the conversion of sinners. This was a novel idea, which I must say had never entered my mind.

From this place I was taken to Sandgate to speak at the Soldiers' Home, where an interesting work had been going on for some years. The soldiers there were doubtless brave men who did not care for bullets; but they could not bear a draught of fresh air, and consequently the meeting room was very hot and exhausting.

One evening I was feeling so unusually tired, that at half-past ten o'clock I was thinking about bed (though my friend and I used to delight in a talk after supper), when there came a knock at the door, and I was told that a sergeant wished to see me. On entering the room I saw a soldier sitting with his head bowed down over the table. "Well, friend," I said, "what can I do for you?"

"I have come over from Sandgate," he replied, "to have a little talk with you—I was at your meeting this evening."

"Indeed! and what did you think about it?"

"Why, I cannot say much for the company you had there, singing and praying—the hypocrites! That man, for instance, who raised the hymn for you—I dare say you think he is a saint; I have punished him many a time, and I'll have him in the cells again before long."

"What has he done?" I inquired.

"Why, he is a regular canting hypocrite, and nothing else."

"So am I, they say. Does he pray in the barracks?"

"Pray, yes; and draws such a long solemn face, I hate it. If you only saw as many of these Christians as I do, I'm sure you would not belong to them."

"I do not know about that. There are two ways of looking at the matter. When I see a bad Christian it makes me more jealous for Christ, not less. Supposing you saw that man of whom you are speaking (I do not know him; I thought I raised the hymn myself)—however, supposing you saw that man trampling the colours of your regiment under his feet, while Russians, French, and others were standing by and laughing, what would you do? Would you say, 'I will have no further connection with such a regiment, or with such an army; I will give it up'—would you?"

"No," he replied, drawing himself up, "I would take the fellow by the throat and hurl him off, and take up the colours and hold them aloft" (suiting the action to the words); "I would say to the Russians, 'Knock me down, before these colours touch the ground.'"

"Bravo!" I said, "that is like a soldier—that is exactly what I mean. If I saw a man trampling on the Cross, or dragging it in the mud, I should take Christ's side, and not the enemy's."

"Well, well," he said, "I don't know why I have taken up so much of your time; for to tell the truth, I came all this way to ask you to pray with me and for me. I am sure I am not right. While you were speaking to-night I felt convinced that if I were to die as I am, there would be no heaven for me. I am 'heaping up wrath,' as you said, 'against the day of wrath.' Lord, have mercy upon me!"

I said, "Now, you talk like a sensible man." I then put the way of salvation before him, and urged him to believe the good news, and thank God for His love in giving His Son to die for him. How can anyone believe in such kindness and love, and not thank his Benefactor?"

"I do, I will!" he exclaimed; "Lord, help me to thank Thee from my heart!"

"When a friend pays your debt, your duty is, not to pay it again, but to accept the release he gives you, and *thank him.* Your language should be, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.'"

"Amen," he added firmly and heartily; and then went away praising God.

Henceforth he became a valiant soldier for Christ, preaching, praying, and testifying wherever he went. It is a noble and pleasing thing to see a soldier who has Christian fortitude and courage, in addition to that which belongs naturally to his military profession.

From Sandgate the work spread to Folkestone; and there, as at Hythe, the Town Hall was the scene of continued operations by means of several evangelists. I had a happy share in the work, and can bear testimony to the good that the Lord did in that place, from time to time, when ignorant curiosity brought people together, to a period when there was intelligent and appreciative attention.

One summer evening, after I had been preaching in the hall, a gentleman came up to me and said, "I thank you for your word: it is a glorious gospel."

"Yes, indeed," I replied; "simple, yet most comprehensive and complete, is the plan of God's salvation."

"It is a blessed thing to keep it," he said.

"Keep it!" I repeated, "keep what? God's salvation should carry you. We do not 'keep' Christ; He keeps us. He died to save, and lives to keep." Seeing that he did not understand my meaning, I said, "Those sheep," pointing to some in a field adjoining the hall at that time, "do not keep their shepherd; their shepherd keeps them." Still he did not appear to catch my meaning. I continued, "I presume by your blue coat and anchor buttons, that you have been a sailor." He nodded assent. "When you went to sea, did you carry your ship, or did the ship carry you?"

"Why, the ship carried me, of course."

"You would have been under water if you had tried to carry the vessel; and I expect that is where you are now."

"Come here," he said, taking me quietly by my coat and leading me into a side room, "tell me more about that."

"About what?" I inquired, wishing to draw him out.

"Why," he said, "I have been trying hard and making resolutions to keep myself. Is that all wrong?"

I replied by asking another question. "Do you not see that it is so, and know that it is ineffectual? Satan is too much for you; the world bears you away; and the flesh, your old Adam, is too strong for the young Christian. You must needs be kept and upheld by a power and a Person stronger than all of these put together. Do you remember when you gave yourself up as a sinner for salvation?"

"Yes, I do; thank God!"

"Then now give yourself up as a saved one to be kept by Him." I directed him to Romans v. 10: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life!"

"That is very clear," he said with astonishment, staring at the words; "I never saw that before in my life!"

"Here," I added, "is another verse, the last in this same chapter: 'As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.' It does not matter how strong sin is, grace *is stronger*; grace is only another word for the power of Christ's presence, His real presence according to His own promise, '*I am with you alway*' (Matt. xxviii. 20).

Put the name Christ for the word 'grace,' and you will see the right meaning of many texts."

That gentleman received the word, and it evidently took root in his heart, and brought forth fruit to the Lord's glory and the good of many other souls. There was a work of the Lord in this place which will surely be seen and acknowledged openly hereafter.

From thence the work spread on further still to Dover, and even to Walmer, where the Lord made His word to prosper abundantly. It was the means of awakening many souls to seek salvation, and of stirring believers to realize eternal things more fully than heretofore. It would be impossible to tell in detail of these meetings; and also unnecessary, now that such gatherings are happily common, and their results so well known. One little incident and lesson from this part I would place on record, and then pass on.

In the garrison at Dover there were two officers quartered bearing the same name, though they were not related. It so happened that one of these was anxious about his soul, and the other was not. A letter written and addressed to the former fell into the hands of the latter. Reading it, he was awakened, and soon they both found peace, and came out very decidedly on the Lord's side. One of these gentlemen, who is now preaching the Gospel with power and blessing, came to me one day and said, "When you are preaching, do not say a worldly man is not happy; I feel sure that you will lose power and influence if you do. He is not happy in your way certainly, because he knows nothing about it; but he is in his own, and no mistake. I am sure that when I was in the world I enjoyed it immensely. I used to go to the 'Derby,' and looked forward to it with great anticipation; and when the time came I went to the race with much delight; swinging along with four horses, a veil on, a naked doll in my hat, a great cigar in my mouth, and a lot of jolly fellows with me—why I was as happy as happy could be. I could not enjoy that now, to be sure; but before I was changed that was my idea of pleasure, and at that time very real it was. I am convinced there are many others in the same way still; and I long to bring them to a better mind, and to better joys.'

This is wise advice, and worthy of consideration.

I remember meeting another officer from Dover, at the Hanover Square Rooms in London, where I had been giving some addresses. He came up to me with a cheery countenance and said, "You Christians are such a gloomy lot; you do not recommend your religion at all. I am jolly; I should like something bright."

I said, "I agree with you. I like something bright too, and do not approve of gloomy religion; for I think that we Christians have more right to be happy, and have more cause for happiness, than any other people in the world. But," I added, "I cannot help thinking, that even if it were otherwise, I would far rather have my gloom in this world than in the next. You would rather have it all bright and jolly now; that is a very poor choice."

He made no reply; but a fortnight afterwards he met me and said, "I do not want my gloom in the next world."

I was thankful to hear him say so, and pointed him to the One who alone could change his heart, and make him truly happy in this world, and happier still hereafter.

Surely it is not too much to expect that God can make His children more joyful than the devil can; and that Christ has pleasures at His right hand such as the world can never give. It is a great mistake for men to refuse salvation, and the service of the blessed Lord Jesus, because they desire happiness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Young Nobleman.

1865.

ONE evening after I had been preaching at the Town Hall at Hythe, a young gentleman came up to me and said, "You are the very man I have been wanting to meet for several years." He told me that one day, while he was with his regiment in Canada, he was marching along with a drawn sword in his hand, and the band was playing a quick, lively tune, when all at once he felt that God loved him, and that his sins were pardoned. This made him exceedingly happy, and he went along with a light buoyant step, scarcely conscious of anything but his joy. This happiness continued, he said, for several months, and then faded away. "But now I know," he added, "why I may be happy, and rejoice in the forgiveness of my sins."

"Why, is it?" I inquired.

"Because," he replied, "Christ has died to save us!"

"I do believe, I will believe,
That Jesus died for me!"

"For me!" he continued, with more emphasis and deeper meaning. "I am free, thank God."

"That is right," I said: "go on; thank and praise God, and never be ashamed to tell what He has done, not only *for* you on the cross, but *in* you by the Holy Ghost."

The next day he came to me again; but this time with some doubts in his mind. He said, "Something keeps telling me that I have not repented enough. Ought I not to go through some process of conviction?"

I advised him to continue to trust in God, and said, "Let Him deal with you as He thinks right. If deeper conviction is needful, you may be sure you will have it in due time." He went away happy, and returned in the evening, bringing two other officers with him, to whom he had been speaking about their souls.

Soon after this my young friend left Hythe for Winchester, where his regiment was quartered. There he bore good testimony, which was received with deference and attention, perhaps all the more so from the fact of his being a nobleman. After a time it came to his mind to consult with an influential clergyman about the advisability of inviting me to come and stir up the people. "Yes, yes," was the reply; "we will see about this, and make arrangements."

However, there was so much delay in the prosecution of the said arrangements that my friend called again. This time he was told that unhappily Lent, the proper season for such services and preachings, was past; and Advent, another such season, had not arrived yet.

"When will it come?" asked his lordship.

"At the end of November or beginning of December; which you know, my lord, is a very good time for special sermons."

"That is a long while to wait," said my friend; "and Lent, when is that?"

"Oh, that is in the spring, just before Easter."

"Very well," replied his lordship, "we will have special services in November and in March too; but surely, as we have six months to wait, there is plenty of time to have something at once."

"Certainly, my lord," said the Canon; and he again promised to "see about it."

This answer was too indefinite to satisfy Lord A——; so he went off to another of the clergy and obtained the promise of his church for a Sunday, and for some week-day evenings besides. Having succeeded thus far, he engaged a large public hall for the other evenings, and a smaller one for morning meetings. Then he invited me to come and begin operations in the name of the Lord.

Here, under the patronage of his lordship, the people came out in large numbers; and an evident awakening began among the civilians and soldiers of the place. There was every promise of a good mission, and a good one it was.

One afternoon I was invited by Lord A—— to his room in the officers' quarters to give an address. There were present fourteen officers, of all grades from a colonel down to an ensign. They were free and friendly enough with me till after the prayer for a blessing on our gathering; then, as if they were afraid some action would take place, the majority of them went away behind me, "out of range," as they called it, and sat upon his lordship's bed at the other end of the room.

It had been stipulated, "honour bright," that I was not to exceed the hour; so I was careful to keep within the time, and concluded my address with prayer. When this was over some of the officers came and questioned me about what I had said, and one asked for further particulars of a story I had related. In this way an animated conversation ensued, which lasted an hour and a half longer. I was to preach in the church that night, and when I announced this, one said he would go, and then another, and another, till it so happened that most of them attended the service, instead of going to mess.

I had for my text, "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him" (Deut. xxxii. 11, 12). I endeavoured to show that in this way God stirs up our nest or resting-place, and flutters over us in His love; while we are bemoaning our desolation. When we acknowledge His presence, and yield ourselves to Him, He takes us in hand and carries us by His grace. Christ came for this very purpose, and rejoices in every opportunity to do us good. The power of God was in the place, and I felt sure that He was giving blessing to the Word, though we had no after-meeting to make it manifest.

As we were walking back from church, one young officer was exceedingly happy and spoke freely of the joy he felt. Lord A—— said to him, "You remind me of the day when I first rejoiced like that. Are you saved?"

"Saved!" replied the other, "what do you mean? How can a man be saved here?"

"Oh," said Lord A——, "I thought you were happy because you were saved. What are you so happy about?"

His friend resented the idea of being saved; and, as he afterwards acknowledged, at the time *was* angry. "If he had asked me, Are you religious? Do you read your Bible? Are you a communicant? I should have said, 'Yes, I am:' but I was vexed when he asked me if I was saved!"

His nest was evidently stirred by that question, and he did not rest till he received salvation, which was soon afterwards. From that time he became as earnest and zealous as his friend. These two commenced a prayerful study of their Bibles; and whenever there was an interval of quiet, they would come to ask the meaning of this or that passage of Scripture. Sometimes, when there was half an hour to spare, they would say, "Now let us have some food." They hungered for the sincere milk of the Word that they might grow thereby. They did grow, and in due time required strong meat: that is, they became workers, and teachers of others. (Heb. v. 12.) Our meat should be to do the will of our Master; and while we are thus employed, our souls are fed and strengthened in the best way.

In the providence of God these two friends were led into different fields of work, and are now separate centres of usefulness. This is the Lord's way of sending His people out to scatter the seed of His truth, instead of all settling in one place to build a city, and a tower, and to make to themselves a name.

Besides these, several other officers were brought to the Lord; and they are still active workers in His vineyard.

During this visit the place was stirred, and there was of course the usual sensation. Some people were for the work, and others altogether against it; but the fear of the Lord was upon them.

One sad incident, among other events which occurred, had a most solemnizing effect. It was the sudden death of a well-known gentleman who had been attending the meetings. One evening he was arrested by something I had said about the work of the Holy Spirit, and the danger incurred by resistance. I stated that there were three chances, so to speak, against the unconverted man—he might die to-night (that he did not think was likely); the Lord might come and shut the door (that was something still more remote); God may take away the Holy Spirit. (This last remark came like an arrow which fastened upon him.) Instead of acting on the warning, he went home, and talked about it till the last thing at night, and again the first thing in the morning.

After breakfast, as he was walking in the street, he fell down as if dead. He was brought home insensible, and died shortly after, saying, "I am lost."

Lord A—— was not only anxious about the place in which he was quartered; but longed to go home and see his noble parents, to tell them what the Lord had done for his soul; also to inquire how it was with them. Having obtained leave of absence he went, and to his great joy, found that his mother had experienced a spiritual change, though she had said but little about it. Her son's conversion was the means of bringing her out to take a more decided stand,

and also of encouraging other branches of the family to do the same. His father was much absorbed in his own thoughts, and lived in some far-off unapproachable place. He gave no expression to his feelings either for or against the change that had taken place in his son.

This was not satisfactory to Lord A——, so he wrote asking me to come and visit him at his father's house as soon as I could arrange to do so. On my arrival at the station he met and conducted me to the fine old Elizabethan mansion. On reaching the grand entrance, the leaves of the door were opened by two men in gorgeous livery; then two more in similar dress came forward to take my hat and umbrella; and again, two more held open the inner doors. There I beheld a gentleman in plain clothes, who, bowing, asked my name, and then led me to another gentleman in plain clothes also. This one, having received my name from the before-mentioned, bade me step forward; passing into the reception-room, he bowed and said, "The Rev. Mr. Haslam, my lady."

This ceremony over, her ladyship came forward and welcomed me most kindly, at the same time thanking me for the help I had been to her son. He was present himself, and confirmed what his mother had said. Then he took me to my apartment in one of the long corridors of this ancient house, where I observed my name affixed to the door.

Inside I saw a servant with powdered head busy unpacking my portmanteau, and distributing my poor little things about the room. I had made it a study to lessen my wants in order to carry as little luggage as possible on my frequent journeys. My few articles certainly looked very meagre in that large room. Judging from the countenance of the man, I could see that he did not think much either of me or my belongings.

Here I was left to myself till the dressing-bell rang; then my attendant again appeared, and told me dinner would be served at eight o'clock. With some degree of embarrassment, he inquired if I had brought a dress-coat. "Oh dear, no," I replied, "I do not possess such a thing, and have not had one for the last fifteen years."

"Indeed, sir," he said, drawing himself up rather gravely; 'then will you dine as you are, sir?'

"Certainly," I replied.

He was perplexed and said, "Shall I inform her ladyship that unfortunately your dress-clothes are not come?"

"Yes, do so; if you please."

So bowing, he disappeared. In a little time he returned, and knocked at my door. "Come in," I said; and in he came, looking much relieved. He announced that her ladyship would excuse the dress-coat, as there was no one coming to dinner.

This man was a puzzle to me: in fact, all the powdered gentlemen were to me most incomprehensible beings. I did so long to ask them about their souls; but the chilly distance in which they lived made it seemingly impossible.

I felt altogether out of my element, like a fish out of water; and very wretched. The grandeur of the surroundings did not charm me; all was too cold and dead. Lord A—— and his mother were most kind, and did what they could to set me at ease; but "my lord," the great man of the mansion, was very far off, and kept great state. At meals I sat at her ladyship's end of the table, and could only see his lordship at a distance. He was the person I had come to reach, and the one for whom I was praying; but how was I ever to get near him? I thought that perhaps at family prayer, the Lord might give me a word. But no; when the bell sounded we were duly marshalled to the chapel of the house, where his lordship's chaplain was in attendance. This gentleman began reading the morning prayers of the Church, and continued steadily through psalms, lessons, and collects, to the end. Then his lordship rose and went out, and we all followed, the numerous household standing.

After a day or two I began to get weary of doing nothing. At length an opportunity unexpectedly occurred. At luncheon I was asked to tell the story of "Old Edward."* While I related it the company at table were all attention, as also the eight or ten servants who were waiting in the room. When I had finished a few remarks were made, upon which his lordship waved his hand, and the servants disappeared.

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* This story is given at length in my book called "Building from the Top," page 129.

A short conversation followed, when the ladies rose to go away. Then his lordship beckoned to me and pointed with his finger to a deep window recess. Seeing him move thither I followed, when he said, "Tell me that story again." I did so, and from the interest he took in it, and the questions he asked, I saw that the dear man was not really so frozen as he looked.

"Is that old man saved? Is he happy now?" asked his lordship.

"Yes," I replied, "he is, and will be happier still when he goes up yonder."

"Thank you!" said the nobleman, pressing my hand.

"I wish I could hear you thank God before you thank me. It is His truth, not mine, my lord."

"Yes, yes," he replied, and moved away.

Certainly there was a change in his lordship's manner, at least towards me; so that I felt much encouraged. When he was told that I was not happy without preaching somewhere, he remarked, "Well, there are churches enough." He at once wrote to the clergy of the adjoining town to ask them to arrange some special services.

This was done, and the meetings duly announced: and his lordship attended them. Then it came to his mind to invite the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood to the great hall of the mansion. Here a large and influential assembly was gathered at a few days' notice. As requested, I gave them an address. This being ended, his lordship surprised the company by expressing his approval of the plain words I had spoken upon the subject of present salvation and forgiveness of sins. He said, that he was delighted to hear such truths announced in that hall. "Perhaps," he added, "no meeting of this kind has ever taken place here before; certainly not since the time of the Reformation."

Some of the company came forward and shook hands with me; others said enough by their looks; and others again looked at the pictures, and made remarks to one another as if I were not there, and had not said anything.

I believe that a change was wrought in his lordship; and that my visit was not in vain. The great man was greatly changed. But still his son was not satisfied: there were certain race-horses which were not given up.

Lord A—— continued praying about these "wretched beasts," as he called them, till one day the news reached him that his father was very ill. He determined to go and see him at once, and made up his mind to speak upon this subject. He had scarcely taken a seat when the old gentleman said, "A——, I am glad you are come: I have been wishing to see you for some time. B—— does not care about the horses, you know. F—— does not want them, and I am sure you do not; so I have parted with them all."

"Thank God," exclaimed Lord A——, "I am glad to hear that."*

On my second visit to Winchester, I met with a hearty reception from those who had been converted on and after my first visit. With their co-operation we worked this time under more encouraging circumstances, and many more were added to the Lord. But complaints were made that I was preaching in another man's parish, and that officers were preaching and praying in public halls. These gentlemen might go to worldly assemblies; might dine out; might shoot, hunt, drive, dance, or, in short, do anything but take an interest or part in the salvation of their fellow-sinners.

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* This nobleman died, and was succeeded by another king who did not know Joseph. The next time I visited that place I was not asked to the mansion, nor even to any of the churches; but preached in the Assembly Rooms, where the Lord owned and blessed the Word.

In the after-meeting I spoke to many, and amongst others to a lady and her companion, who both went away rejoicing. I called the next morning according to request; the lady told me that she had been miserable for years, and could not hear what she wanted: that one day travelling up to London a Roman Catholic "priest" was in the carriage and spoke to her. In the course of conversation he gave her to understand that the Church of England had no authority to forgive sins, but that he had! He persuaded her to make her submission to "the Church," which she consented to do. "Now," she added, "I am happy, and do not want the priest. Will you go and tell him so for me."

"No," I replied, "you had better send for him, and tell him yourself in my presence."

He duly came, and entering the room smiling, looked at me as if he thought his convert had made another. When she told him of her conversion, he first tried to dissuade her; then in the name of the "Church" warned her; and at last threatened her with a curse. He went away very angry. Poor man, he was in earnest; though he was utterly ignorant of Gospel salvation.

Remonstrance was sent to head-quarters, and an order issued prohibiting officers from taking any part in public religious services.

One evening after my address I called on some one to pray. In an instant Lord A—— broke out in prayer as if he could not restrain himself. The Adjutant happened to be present, and was much distressed, "because," as he said, "I must report him to-morrow morning." I told his lordship this, upon which he went up frankly to the Adjutant and said, "My dear fellow, don't be unhappy; do your duty freely."

The report was sent, and the offender was asked to explain his conduct. He wrote to the Colonel stating what he had done, and added that he could not promise to refrain. Upon this he was put under arrest, and two sentries kept his door. "But," he said, "he was very happy; he had his Bible and harmonium, and no parades." The Colonel of his regiment called upon him as a friend and pointed out the evil effect of insubordination. "The order may be a bad one, but it is an order; obey it, and then take steps to alter it."

"I want to try the order," said his lordship.

"Oh," replied the Colonel, "in the court-martial they will make short work of your case. 'Was the order made?' 'Yes.' 'Was it broken?' 'Yes.' Good, bad, or indifferent, you must obey orders in the army: you cannot get them changed by disobeying them."

Lord A—— was open to reason; so he wrote an apology, whereupon the arrest was taken up and the prisoner released to his duty. In the House of Commons a member asked the question, whether it was true that officers were not permitted to exercise their Christian privileges at public meetings?

What became of the order I do not know; but the regiment with the obnoxious officer was shortly afterwards ordered to Canada. There my lord had more liberty, and used it freely, till he came into collision with a Bishop. In his surprise at some of the Episcopal statements, he could not help asking the Bishop if he was converted.

This was most dreadful! Such a severe reprimand came from head-quarters, that he gave up his commission, and several other officers did the same. These men have been preaching and working for God ever since.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Bishops and Clergy.

1865.

MY parish of Buckenham, as I have already said, was but a small one. I accepted it in the hope that I might be the more free to do good in the county at large; or rather, in the two counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. My hope was not disappointed; for I received letters from all parts, inviting me to come and preach the Gospel. Besides the invitations, I also received letters from bishops and clergy, taking me painfully to task. As to these complaints, I must say that I never intended or desired to make myself obnoxious to the ecclesiastical powers; but for all that I could not refuse the appeals which were continually sent me. It was not pleasant to be reproved; nor can I say that my heart did not beat with some agitation when I read these letters. Bishops, one after another, reprimanded me, and sometimes two or more at the same time.

My brethren, the clergy, were even fiercer in their denunciations, and in less guarded terms gave me the benefit of their thoughts concerning my doings, or misdoings.

One of the kind I will mention here, and willingly let the others pass; the more so, because times are changed, and there is now increasing sympathy with evangelistic effort.

While I was away on my visit to Kent, I preached at the Town Hall in Folkestone, as I have already narrated in a previous chapter. The Vicar of the place would not condescend to write to me, but preferred his complaints to the rural Dean. This dignitary consulted a lawyer, and with his help, as I suppose, drew up a grave charge against me for intruding into that parish. It was something to the following effect:—"Whereas a person entitled Rev. William Haslam, clerk in holy orders, Rector of the Rectory of Buckenham, in the county of Norfolk and diocese of Norwich, did in the afternoon of such a day, in such a month, and such a day of the month, enter into the town of Folkestone, and then and there proceeded to the Town Hall of the aforesaid town of Folkestone; and did there, in the presence of witnesses (and they were not a few), deliver a religious address, or lecture, or sermon, without the permission of the Vicar of the parish, in which the said Town Hall is situate," &c.

This paper, in full official character, and in due legal phraseology, was forwarded to the Archbishop of Canterbury (of that time), as diocesan of the parish in which the offence complained of was perpetrated. His Grace enclosed the curious document to me, with a note, demanding why I intruded myself into his diocese without his permission? and how I dared to preach in another man's parish without his invitation? Upon what authority did I do so? There was some delay in the delivery of this letter, with its great seal, owing to my absence from home. In the meantime a friend of mine in London heard that the Archbishop had "got hold of Mr. Haslam, and was about to stop him." He immediately called upon the Earl of Shaftesbury, who promptly took occasion to remind his Grace of the Act of Parliament which legalizes such preachings. His lordship was good enough to say, that he thought the clergy of the Church of England ought to be as free to preach the Gospel anywhere as other people, if not more so.

In reply to his Grace, I acknowledged that I had been to Folkestone more than once, and that the Lord had given blessing to His Word in that place. As to my authority for doing so, I could only plead, with all deference, that I was constrained by the love of God inside, and by the Word of God outside. I begged to say respectfully, yet firmly, that I had full liberty to do so, according to law. His Grace sent my letter, together with a complaint, to my Bishop. He immediately summoned me to his presence.

On the appointed day and time, I put in my appearance, and was asked to take a seat. Then this methodical prelate went to a drawer, and opening it, took out a large bundle of letters; and proceeding to another drawer, as if the one devoted to my parish was not enough, he took out more letters, and then deposited the heap on the table in silence. Looking at me, the Bishop said, "It would appear that you have the care of all the churches." I made no reply. Selecting one letter from the pile, his lordship asked me whether I had been preaching in Kent. "Yes," I said, "I have at several places; Hythe and Folkestone among the number."

"Pray, upon what authority did you do this?"

I replied, "I have already answered that question in a letter to the Archbishop."

However, I had to go over the old story of many years, which bishops and clergy could not—or, it appeared, would not—see, that gospel preaching is not an official or ministerial act. I claimed the liberty to preach the Gospel wherever I was invited. The Bishop asked me how I divested myself so easily of my ministerial character.

"Why, my lord," I replied, "this is one of the easiest things possible. In this county the clergy do not go out shooting and fishing ministerially. The rural Dean himself shot me the other day as I was passing along the road, because some partridges happened to rise. Fortunately they were spent shots and pattered on my waistcoat; but they might have struck my face and put out my eyes!" His lordship said no more on that subject.

Among other questions the Bishop asked me whether I had forbidden a young lady to go to confirmation? "Certainly not," I answered; "I remember once preaching for a clergyman, and that after the sermon a lady came into the vestry and said, 'If your sermon is right, this book is all wrong.' I asked 'What is the book?' She replied, 'It is one upon Confirmation.' I then put the question to her whether she wished to be confirmed. She answered in the affirmative. I said, 'Are you going to be confirmed in your sins, or in the forgiveness of your sins?'"

The Bishop interrupted me somewhat sharply, and said, "Why did you say that?"

"Because," I replied, "that you, as the Bishop, present the candidates for confirmation to God as persons who have received forgiveness of their sins." Then that subject dropped.

For nearly two hours I was closeted with his lordship and must say that I was grieved and disappointed with the result of my interview. I should have counted it an honour to be browbeaten by some of the bishops; but under this good prelate I felt discouraged, and hurt in mind, that he did not understand me better; and that such as he, for the sake of legal and ecclesiastical technicalities, should take part with some unconverted men, who neglected their parishes and the souls of their people, as if parish boundaries were of more consequence than the salvation of souls. He was not responsible for my going about, and he might have been glad that the Gospel was taken into parishes where it was never preached; and more particularly where sacramental errors were taught in place of spiritual truth. It appeared to me, that if a clergyman could show a large number of communicants (converted or unconverted), he was smiled upon. One unconverted man almost cried because he had not a thousand communicants at Easter, with which to fill up his report to the Bishop, and declared that he would leave the parish. This and such like men were set up as examples, and their parishes as models. All this was very trying, and made me restless.

From many of my brethren, the clergy, I did not expect much, and I must say received less. There were, however, honourable exceptions. Some entirely sympathized with the work, and were as fearless and free as I was about preaching. Others, within judicious and prudent bounds, rejoiced in spiritual work. One brother wrote to say, "Thank God for directing your steps to my parish; God's blessing come with you! Kindly honour me by staying in my house for the night." Another wrote, "I hear you are coming to my parish. As you are a 'priest of God,' I cannot bear the thought that you should preach anywhere but in God's house. Come there! We will defer Evensong to any hour you name, and then you shall preach in the pulpit of the parish church."

Dear well-meaning man, I hope that he obtained a blessing to his soul; but it was hard dead work to preach in that church; and most effectually did the ceremonials strangle evangelistic effort.

These instances were by no means the rule, but rather the exception. When I was in the position of a curate—a small man of straw—my irregularities were passed over in silence, or my Rector was blamed; but when I was dubbed Rector, it was altogether beyond endurance that I should go about preaching the Gospel. Preaching in other men's parishes without their leave was a thing not to be tolerated, though souls were perishing.

I received rude letters, calling me "ungentlemanly;" letters threatening me with the terrors of the Bishop; and letters of remonstrance. These things were hard to bear; but I must confess that I would rather have had them over and over again than no work for God, and no souls saved. Woe was me if I did not preach the Gospel; and woe was me if I did!

A Rector who heard that his squire had invited me to come and preach in a barn (though it was nearly two miles from his church, and in a neglected part of the parish), wrote to threaten me, that if I dared to enter his parish, as I had done that of others, he would prosecute me to the utmost extremity of the law. I wrote back kindly to say that I had full liberty by law to preach anywhere; but that it would be happier and more pleasant to have his permission, which I hoped he would not refuse.

He answered me in a very different tone, entreating me as a brother clergyman not to come into his parish; that I was not aware of the circumstances, and he did not care to write about them; but when he had the pleasure of meeting me, he would tell me all, and was quite sure that I should fully concur with him. He therefore begged that I would defer my visit to the barn. I wrote again to say, that the bills announcing the barn meeting were out now, and distributed far and wide; and that if it was known he had hindered the service it would do him far more harm than my preaching. So with thanks for his letter I begged his permission.

In hot haste came a note in return, beginning "Sir," and after a free expression of some of his thoughts about me, there was the following choice conclusion, which it is no breach of confidence to record, as it appeared in the newspapers at the time. "You are not original, by any means, or the first of your kind. There were such as you in St. Paul's days; and he called them emissaries of Satan, children of the devil." After writing this with a bold hand. he as boldly subscribed himself as my "faithful brother." I could not help thanking him for standing by me as a faithful brother under such dire circumstances.

Smiling apart, it is refreshing to receive such bursts of the old carnal nature, and its enmity against the Gospel. It is far better, and more genuine, than assenting indifference and hollow insincerity. I respected that honest man, and prayed that his zeal might be directed into a better channel.

Another Rector had a correspondence with me about preaching without his leave in the Corn Hall in his parish. Then, without notice, he put our letters into the newspaper. I was not sorry, as it published and made known my answer once for all upon this subject.

Soon afterwards I received a "round robin" from the clergy of a deanery in chapter assembled, asking me to refrain from entering the limits of a certain extensive deanery. This document was signed by all the clergy present at that meeting, and was forwarded to me by the rural Dean, with a most kind and brotherly letter from himself. I could easily have replied to the former; but the latter baffled me by its kindness and Christian tone. I was perplexed, and did not know how to answer. I wrote several letters and tore them up again, till at last a friend with whom I was staying in Lancashire said, "Tell them you are sorry you cannot oblige them, that you belong to another Master." I made this idea the basis of my reply. What effect it had I know not; but I could not agree to give up my liberty in Gospel preaching. Not that I did not love order; but I loved souls more: and if the clergy determined to keep me out of their churches, I was resolved to avail myself of my privilege of free speech, notwithstanding all the disagreeable consequences. A man wet through is not afraid of a shower; and now that I was known as a thorough "black sheep," I thought I would do all the good I could in all the places I could reach.

As years advanced, it was found that the prejudice and fear entertained as to the effect of my preachings were groundless. It was observed that the dreaded gatherings stirred up the people beneficially, and in many cases brought them to church more frequently. An influential clergyman stated at a clerical meeting that, as far as he knew or could ascertain, congregations had been doubled, and communicants increased. This being the case, the animosity which had prevailed against me began to melt away; and I was invited to come and preach, even by clergymen in churches.

One clergyman who was sitting next to me at the Mildmay Conference, after looking about a good deal said—

"Can you see a man named Haslam anywhere?"

I looked up and down the Iron Room in which the meetings were held at that time, and said—

"I cannot see him about. What do you want with him?"

"Oh," he replied, "he is a fine fellow. I want to invite him to my parish."

"If that is the case," I said, "I am your man. My name is Haslam. What can I do for you?" We took out our pocket-books, and noted down an engagement.

On visiting him I was rejoiced to find a brother labouring to do good, though under difficulties, and was glad to be a little help to him. He was burdened with a heavy load, trying to please God and man too! "We cannot serve two masters."

About this time some of the clergy of Norwich desired to have a twelve days' mission, similar to one which had been recently held in London. The Bishop was rather averse to the proposition, and so asked for a requisition from the clergy, that he might ascertain how many would join in the movement. This document was soon forthcoming, and was signed by fifty-eight out of sixty-two clergymen in the city. Now his lordship took up the matter in earnest, and carried it through with thoughtful and prayerful consideration. The Bishop objected to the term "Mission:" so he designated the effort, "The Church's Call." His lordship exhorted the clergy to prepare their own parishes and people; while he for his part undertook to do something to prepare the clergy. He invited them to the chapel of the palace several times every week, for exhortation and prayer. I was asked to explain to the assembled brethren the difference between a mission and ordinary ministrations. I said the latter might be illustrated by the work of a shepherd who feeds and leads out his sheep; whereas the former is like that of a fisherman, whose special business it is to enclose and catch fish. The bishop proposed the four following questions:—

WHAT IS A MISSION?

IS A MISSION DESIRABLE?

MUST IT BE A REVIVAL MISSION?

HOW CAN IT BE PROMOTED?

I replied to these questions in my address, which I afterwards published in the form of a tract. At the same time I also put out two more tracts, one entitled, "The After-Meeting," and the other, "Fishers of Men." *

In the arrangement of this mission, four churches, situated close together, were assigned to me. I preached in each of these at least once every day, reserving the largest for the evening service. Besides this, I also preached in ten other churches in the city during the twelve days of "The Church's Call." Times were changed for me in Norwich; and I must confess I felt encouraged, and all the happier in my work.

The Bishop, in anticipation of blessing, appointed a day of thanksgiving. This was announced in large red letters on the same bill as "The Church's Call." The Thanksgiving Service did not immediately follow the conclusion of the mission, but took place a few weeks after, when the Bishop had satisfied himself as to the general results. Before the appointed day, a meeting of the clergy was summoned at the palace, to report any benefit derived from this special effort, which had been put forth. One after another of the clergy testified of good received. They said, souls were saved, Bible classes established, congregations increased, and communicants multiplied. One earnest man, who had been exceedingly prejudiced against after-meetings, honestly confessed his mistake. He said, that he had forbidden his "missioner" having an after-meeting. "What may I do, then?" asked the preacher. "You may invite people to come and speak to you at the steps of the pulpit." No one came. The next day he said, "You may invite them to the vestry." No one came. "Very likely," interposed the Bishop in his quiet way, "if they knew the size of your vestry as well as I do." "Well, my lord," continued the clergyman, "at length I told my missioner he might have an after-meeting in the schoolroom. When we arrived there, we found the place quite full; and God granted us very manifest blessing." Then he bore witness to the usefulness of this service. He said, that he felt he had now found a missing link of his ministry. The Bishop summed up by saying, it appeared to him that in the churches where

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* Published by Jarrold & Sons, Norwich.

no after-meeting had been held the effect had passed away like a dream; but that permanent results remained in those parishes where the after-meeting had been adopted.

There is no question on this subject now; but twelve years ago this was most valuable testimony.

At the Thanksgiving Service the Bishop preached. He gave the result of the mission in a tabulated form, and by his eloquent appeal stirred many hearts, urging them to go on and prosper. I believe this mission was not only productive of good to many souls; but it also brought some of the clergy, and others besides, to see that efforts put forth in faith may reasonably be expected to bear fruit. Moreover, when such efforts are countenanced by persons in position and authority, as in this case, they command more attention; and, in proportion, the result is greater.

Whether a man goes forth alone, in contravention of ecclesiastical precedents, or whether he goes in the full sunshine of such patronage, God's Word is not bound; and it may prove in the one case, as much as in the other, the savour of life unto life.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Social Gatherings.

1864–71.

THIS short account of the work in Norfolk will, I fear, be insufficient to satisfy readers in that county. I can only say to such, that it is also very disappointing to myself, to be obliged to pass over many events and scenes which would have been interesting as well as useful.*

I must, however, not omit to notice the happy and profitable Christian intercourse we enjoyed, from time to time, at social gatherings.

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* I may, if time permit, tell some of these events in Illustrated Tracts later on.

The reviving and quickening influence of the Holy Spirit was not by any means confined to the working classes. It included, under its blessing, many persons in the higher ranks of society. For such as these, we devised stated meetings for Bible-readings. Here we sat together at the feet of Jesus, to learn of Him, by any one through whom He pleased to speak. Besides this, we sang hymns; and as a clergyman observed, to his amazement, we "actually knelt down on the drawing-room carpet, and prayed extempore prayers." In the opinion of another clergyman we "darkened counsel by words without knowledge."

Sir Thomas and Lady Beauchamp were pleased to open their rooms at Langley Hall, and our friends at Burlingham House (in the opposite direction) did the same. These two houses with ours made three centres of operation, at which we were enabled week by week to gather believers and their friends. I had the advantage of a railway station near mine, which enabled me to invite people from Norwich, Yarmouth, and other places along the line. My wealthier friends had a numerous acquaintance of carriage people, who thought nothing of driving six or even eight miles to these gatherings. Some of the neighbouring clergymen joined us with the laudable intention of putting us right, and brought their old-world commentaries. These books used to be esteemed when they themselves were young. We were not sorry to have the opportunity of testing them by the Word of God. Our meetings were effectual not only for enlightening and encouraging us, but also for brushing off cobwebs of mistakes and false impressions obtained from traditional teaching. We began, for obvious reasons, by considering elementary truths.

For instance, at an early occasion, we took for our subject, "The Forgiveness of Sins." After a short exposition of a passage of Scripture, we opened the meeting for questions or conversation. By some it was counted great presumption to say our sins are pardoned. By others it was contended that it would be far greater presumption to doubt the efficacy of the Blood of the Lamb of God, which had been shed once for all, for the remission of sins. Through this Man (Christ Jesus) is preached the forgiveness of sins (Acts xiii. 38). As surely as the blood was shed, there is forgiveness; and as certainly as that God has declared the remission of sins through the blood, there may be certainty to the believer's mind. The sacrifice of Christ, together with the Word of God, is surely enough to give forgiveness and assurance.

At the next gathering we considered the subject of "Salvation." The Apostle says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). He is the only one who can save us; and we must each come individually to Him, and have a direct and personal transaction on the subject. Salvation is threefold:—deliverance from the penalty of sin; from its power; and from its presence. In order to be partakers of these benefits, we must, for the first, believe in *Christ who died;* for the second, in *Christ who rose from the dead, and lives;* and for the third, in *Christ who is coming again* to change our vile body, and make it glorious like His own.

This involved another subject, "The Judgment," which we took at our next meeting. It was supposed by some that we could not be assured of final salvation till the Judgment-day. In support of this supposition they alleged that those persons on the right hand of the Judge, as recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, were obliged to ask the question, "When saw we Thee an hungered?" for they did not know. It was brought out in reply, that the Judgment related in this chapter had nothing whatever to do with us, but referred to the "quick" or Gentile nations, who were living on the earth at the time of the Lord's manifest appearing. This statement surprised some of those present, who immediately brought out their commentaries. Notwithstanding this, I went on to say, that there were four judgments revealed to us in the Word of God, perfectly distinct from one another, each having reference to different times and persons.

1. The judgment of sin on the cross once for all. (Heb. x. 12.) "There is no more offering for sin" (Heb. x. 18).

2. The judgment of believers for their works, for which they will be rewarded or not, at the Lord's coming. (2 Cor. v. 10.)

3. The judgment of the "quick" or living nations at the Lord's manifest appearing with His saints. (Matt. xxv. 31.) Observe in this chapter there is no opening of graves or resurrection mentioned.

4. The judgment of the wicked dead; the dead small and great (Rev. xx. 12), who stand before God at the great white throne, at the end of the millennium. St. Paul referring to these last two Judgments, one at the beginning, and the other at the end of Christ's kingdom, with at least a thousand years between them, says, "The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom" (2 Tim. iv. 1).

The prolonged consideration of these texts interested some of the people very much; but there was a reluctance on the part of others to give up their long-cherished expectation of the general Judgment-day. They seemed unwilling to relinquish the prospect of standing "before the bar of God," and held to it as if it were a great advantage.

At our next gathering the subject of "The Judgment" was still uppermost. It was brought forward that St. Paul was not sure of his final salvation, but rather feared "lest that by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself should be a castaway." In referring to the context of this verse (1 Cor. ix. 27), it was shown that the Apostle is not there speaking of *salvation*, but of a *race* and a *crown*. Only Corinthians could run in this race; they must be free men; they must willingly offer themselves; and they must be accepted. So, only Christians could run in this spiritual race: they must be citizens of heaven (Phil. iii. 20); they must be free from condemnation (Rom. viii. 1); they must offer or present themselves for God's service (Rom. xii. 1); and they must be accepted for the purpose.

Then as to the race: there must be the starting-place; the course; the mark to run to; and the prize to win. The Apostle, in the third chapter of Philippians, represents himself as running in this race. He says, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 13, 14).

We know that he gave himself up wholly to the will of God; that he followed Christ; and that his desire was to apprehend that for which he had been apprehended, or accepted, of Christ Jesus (iii. 12). Nothing could be plainer than that the Apostle was here speaking not of salvation, but reward. The one is given to us for Christ's sake; the other for our work: the one at the beginning of Christian life; the other at the end.

Still all present were not satisfied. It is surprising when there is prejudice in the mind how it discolours the clearest words and light of Scripture.

It was urged that the Apostle bids us work out our salvation with fear and trembling. This was quoted as a triumphant challenge to all our previous statements. On referring to this passage of Scripture, we saw that the salvation spoken of is one which has been already given to us—it is "our own." It has been given to us just as a mine of treasure might be given, for the purpose of being worked out, and made profitable. We have not therefore to work *for* salvation, but rather to work *out* what God works *in* us. Yet there lingered in the minds of some the idea of probation, in place of salvation. They were prejudiced against the fact, that believers are saved for time and eternity with everlasting life. They firmly maintained the idea (as if they wished it to be true), that God's people could be lost. Passage after passage of Scripture was quoted, or rather misquoted, to support this error. Amongst others, John xv. was dwelt upon with emphasis. From this it was argued that branches in Christ could be taken away and burnt with fire. On turning to the chapter, it is easy to prove that Christ is there speaking to His disciples about the privilege of fruitfulness, not of salvation: that if a believer is not faithful to his privilege, *it* (not he) is taken away. Again, if a believer professes to be faithful to his privilege, yet does not abide in Christ, and Christ in him—he can do nothing. He is cast forth as a branch and withered; and *men* (not God) gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. Thus their name and usefulness are destroyed, and they themselves are laid aside.

Let these examples suffice to tell the character of our

Bible-readings. We of course ranged into many other subjects, during the space of several years. In these gatherings the interest was well sustained, and we had the pleasure of seeing and conversing with one another. Casual and desultory visiting would not have produced this effect. We were able both to hear and tell of the Lord's work progressing in various parts, and had the opportunity to correct misstatements and various false reports.

In addition to these smaller meetings, we had a very large annual gathering on Whit-monday, which became a regular institution.

In the year 1864, after the first winter's work in the barn at Buckenham (dignified by the name of "Haslam's Cathedral"), I invited those who professed to have received blessing to come for tickets, that we might have a tea-meeting on Whit-monday. Upwards of six hundred and seventy persons applied. Though all this number could not come to tea, they promised to attend the meeting, and bring others with them.

It happened to be a bright and warm summer afternoon; so we had the tables spread in the orchard where the apple blossom was in full bloom. The barn in its whole length was before us as a boundary of the orchard. Upon this I had a long strip of calico extended, with the words, "What hath God wrought!" written upon it in large letters. After tea, bidding the guests a hearty welcome in the name of the Lord, I said I would call their attention to those words, first, as a question, and then as an exclamation.

I asked the people to testify individually as to the blessing he or she had received. One after another then stood up, and in a few words bore witness of salvation. The first hour thus quickly and rapidly passed away. By this time other guests having arrived, we arranged ourselves for the general meeting. After a hymn and prayer, I took the same words as an exclamation, "What hath God wrought!" Our hearts were very full, and with much joy we thanked God again and again. I said, I had come there about eight months before, almost alone; and now behold what the Lord has done in these few months! We had indeed something to praise God for. Here was a large and visible result of the Gospel preachings, which had been maintained under many difficulties. Before we separated that evening, it came to my mind to invite all present to come again on the Whit-monday of the following year. "Come," I said, "and meet others whom the Lord may give us between this time and then."

We met again the next year, under even happier circumstances; and so continued our gatherings for eight successive years, until I left the neighbourhood. I may add that the Lord was pleased to give us fine weather upon every occasion. Sometimes it rained the day before; sometimes the day after; and sometimes even before and after; but on the Whit-monday itself we had no rain. On one occasion the clouds were threatening, and not a few feared that we should have a down-pour; but it did not come. One woman thought she felt a drop of rain, and put up her umbrella, when a brother from the waggon platform cried out, "Sister, where is your faith?" Instantly the umbrella disappeared amidst loud laughter. She, as well as the rest of the company (numbering at that time more than fifteen hundred persons), remained dry. It did rain in torrents that night; but not till all the people had gone home.

Besides this favourable weather and sunshine, we had, at this vernal season of the year, the advantage of flowering trees. If apple blossoms were over, lilacs and laburnums were in bloom; and pink and white hawthorns, also pink and white chestnut flowers, glorified the scene. In addition to these decorations of nature, friends from Yarmouth brought innumerable flags, and took the trouble to display them on all sides. One floated on the church tower; another at the rectory gate; and others were flying from lofty poles which had been set up in conspicuous places for the purpose. These, together with rows of flags suspended from tree to tree, presented a very festive appearance.

Year by year increasing hundreds came to tea, and also to the general meeting afterwards.

One Whit-monday, as I was speaking about the day of Pentecost, as described in the second chapter of the Acts, I remarked, that the Holy Ghost came upon the people who were assembled with one accord in one place. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak as the

Spirit gave them utterance. The multitude were amazed and in doubt, saying one to another, "What meaneth this?" Others mocking, said, "These men are full of new wine." And others were pricked in their hearts, and said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" I said, "The Holy Ghost is not changed; He can fall on us, and fill us now." While I was yet speaking, as if by a preconcerted signal (which of course had not been made), at least fifty or sixty persons fell simultaneously to the ground; and perhaps three times that number praised God with loud voices. It was a sudden burst, proceeding from the same fountain or cause. One did not catch it from another; but all were under the influence of the same Spirit. From the platform the scene was one of extraordinary confusion; and doubtless it presented a similar aspect from other positions. From time to time, one after another—those who had been seeking mercy—found it, and began to rejoice. This made others who had not found peace more terribly in earnest. Thus we continued for two hours, till it was time to go to the trains. Those who were still anxious were led between two persons, and in most cases they were crying as they went along. The trains being late we continued our meeting at the station.

If I could have produced this wonderful result (as I was charged with doing), I should certainly have done so, and on a much larger scale in succeeding years. Indeed, I do not think I should have waited twelve months. It pleased the Lord on that occasion to give abundant blessing in this remarkable manner; but on subsequent occasions it pleased Him to work in other ways. We had various manifestations of Divine Power and Presence, which were equally reassuring, though not so openly blest.

About eight years after my appointment to Buckenham, while preparing for the Whit-monday gathering of 1871, it came to my mind that we were to move away from Norfolk; but I had no idea whither, or under what circumstances. I had nevertheless a vivid impression that this was to be the last time of meeting. I could only say, "Yes, Lord," and leave myself in His hand. We had lived in this pleasant home longer than in any other place since we left Baldhu in the year 1855. I could not help feeling some regret; but this was only a cry of nature, to which I did not consent.

A few days after this presentiment, I received a note from Lord and Lady Howe, with an invitation for me to visit them at Gopsal, in Leicestershire. I went there, and had services and meetings in the churches and villages about. During my stay his lordship said, "You ought to have a church without a parish to it. I have one in London; and when it is vacant you shall have it."

I returned home from this visit with a pretty clear idea that we were to move away from Buckenham that year. However, I did not mention it to any one, but proceeded with the arrangements for our annual gathering. It so happened that a much larger number of persons than usual notified their intention to be present. We had a fine sunny day, and plenty of fruit-blossoms and flowers to adorn the scene, together with many flags. Besides these things we had the unexpected pleasure of welcoming several distinguished friends: Lord and Lady Kintore; Lady Howe; Sir Thomas and Lady Beauchamp; Mr. Dening and his wife (none other than our dear young friend, Geraldine Hooper); Mr. Brownlow North, who was the special speaker of the occasion; and many others. The singing and addresses were more hearty and earnest than ever. Mr. Dening spoke briefly, and then modestly made way for his wife. He designated her as "the express," while he himself was as an ordinary train. After a most telling and powerful word from this gifted lady, Mr. Brownlow North stood up in his heavy fur coat as if it were the depth of winter. His address was good, and worthy of himself. Many precious souls date their blessing from that eventful day.

It was indeed a happy and reviving time. I did not, as on previous occasions, repeat my invitation for the next year. This omission, however, was not noticed at the time; but it came to mind afterwards when it was known we were going to leave. "Last times" are always sad when you know them! I confess that I could not help feeling depressed, though I believe it is always "better on before." At the conclusion of that meeting I felt as if my work in Norfolk were done.

Those scenes have passed away; so have many of the actors in them. Some are at home with the Lord, "over there;" others, like myself, are removed. Sir Thomas Beauchamp is gone home; so are Mr. Brownlow North, Lord Kintore, Lady Howe, Mrs. Dening, and more who were very dear to us. Many of the parishioners also are departed. Amongst them, Fish, the man at the ferry; Pike, the station-master; Waters, the farmer; Flood, the gamekeeper; Wells; the gardener; and Green, at the Hall.

It was said, "All this excitement will cease when Haslam is gone." But, thank God, I am happy to say the work has survived. In many places it has gone on with unabated zeal; and my successor in the Rectory of Buckenham is one who is a faithful witness for the truth.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Little Country Parish.

1871–72.

DURING the summer of 1871, I accepted Lord Howe's offer of Curzon Chapel; and my successor at Buckenham was duly appointed. There being some delay about institution to the church in London, his lordship kindly gave me the living of "Little Missenden," a small country parish in Buckinghamshire. On looking over the vicarage, I found that it was but a cottage, which could not possibly contain my family. His lordship desired me to enlarge it at his expense. Having obtained the necessary money from "Queen Anne's Bounty," I commenced operations without delay. I reversed the house, making the back the front, and the front the back. By re-arranging the rooms, adding new ones, and strengthening the whole with a strong verandah, the little vicarage was soon transformed into a comfortable house. The whole appearance of the place was so altered in a short time, that Lord and Lady Howe could not imagine what we had done to it. There was a huge tree near the house, which not only overshadowed it, but made it very damp and unhealthy; so I decided to take it down. It was quite a sight to see the fall of this majestic elm. No sooner was it down than there came a deaf man, who was a timber-dealer, to see me. He offered to buy the prostrate giant for ten pounds, and convey it away. I accepted his proposal, intending to improve the lawn and garden with the money. He then put his hand into his pocket and took out a shilling. Placing this in my open hand, he kept his finger on it, and looking into my face, said loudly (as if I were deaf too), "That is earnest." I nodded assent. Again he repeated, "Mind, that is earnest." "Very well," I shouted. By this act, he meant to clench the bargain we had made for ten pounds. The accepted shilling was not a pledge to be returned upon the payment of the larger sum, but an earnest, that is, part of the payment itself.

This transaction has often since served me for an illustration of the certainty of our heavenly inheritance. God has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. When we accept this invitation we receive grace; grace is the earnest of glory. As surely as we are partakers of grace, so surely shall we be partakers of the glory. The Apostle tells us, whom He (the Lord) justifies, them He also glorifies (Rom. viii. 30). Christ has redeemed our bodies as well as our souls; and if His redemption has reached our souls, it must and will come to our bodies in due time. He gives grace and glory; the one leads to the other.

While the builder was at hand, I took him into the church, which was close by, to see what we could do to improve that. It was a quaint old building: some parts of which were very ancient and rude in their Saxon antiquity; and other parts more rude still with what were intended for modern improvements. The pulpit, with its capacious reading-desk below, was an unsightly erection, and a great deal too large for the place. We fell to work at once, to demolish the whole structure. To our surprise we found that the props under the pulpit were completely eaten away with dry rot. How it stood I do not know, for with a very little shake it fell to the ground with its own weight. By the following Sunday, a strong and more suitable pulpit was set up; also a convenient prayer-desk. The church was thoroughly cleaned out, nearly a cartload of rubbish taken away from the tower, and dry sticks in abundance from the crows' nests in the belfry. Externally, the church was a picturesque edifice, with a little turreted tower prettily situated. Somehow I could not settle there; for my prayers were dry, and my hopes accordingly very small. Nevertheless, I worked on, hoping against hope. I know it is not by might or by power that God's work is to be done, but by His Spirit only. Therefore, in simple dependence, I trusted Him to lead me in a way that I knew not.

During my ministry I laboured to rouse up the drowsy people, and also endeavoured to build up those who had been quickened. Some of the neighbours thought my preaching was "too exciting." "Exciting!" I cried, "I only wish I could see a little excitement, or any sign of awakening, amongst the congregation."

I have, however, gone before my story, and put second things first.

Before I commenced the alterations at the vicarage, or the improvements in the church, I made it my business to inquire into the spiritual condition of the people. In order to do this, I went from house to house, beginning with the cottages near the church. I first endeavoured to ascertain the names of the occupants; the number of the family; whether they went to church or chapel, or neither; and last, not least, I asked, "Are you converted?" The answers I received to this last question would make one smile, but for the solemn consequences of the unconverted state. Some had been christened; some registered; some confirmed; many vaccinated; but what ever conversion could be, they did not know. At the Baptist Chapel they heard about Election; and at the church they had heard about Baptismal Regeneration; but this new Vicar meant something else. After a whole day's trudge I at last came to a little shop where the name of the occupant was over the door. I wrote that down, and entering in said, "I know your name; now let me ask you, 'Do you go to church?'" "Yes." "Are you a communicant?" "Yes." "Are you converted?" She made no reply.

I continued, "People here do not appear to know anything about conversion. Do you?"

Still she did not speak.

"What do you say? are you converted?"

"I dare not say I am not."

"Very well; thank God for that. Suppose I say you are, I will put C. against your name. Now, can you tell me anything about it? How were you converted?"

"I never told any one in my life."

"Then it is time you did; I should like to hear your history."

She said, "When I was a little girl, there came to the opposite house a man who preached on Sunday afternoons. Whatever his subject was, he always said one thing, 'Whether Churchman or Dissenter, Christ is the door by which you must enter.' He made us understand that we must enter in at the door to be saved, or else we should be lost for ever. Shortly after this time I was taken ill with a fever. My illness was so dangerous that the doctor thought I should die. One evening I overheard him say to my mother, 'Do not be surprised if the child dies in the night; she is very bad.' This frightened me so much that I cried to the Lord to take me inside the door, and save my soul. All at once while I was praying, I felt sure that my sins were pardoned, and my soul saved. At three o'clock in the morning I was so happy that I called my mother and told her. I said, 'O mother! what do you think? Jesus has pardoned my sins, and saved my soul: I am not afraid to die now!'"

The poor woman began to cry, and bade her be quiet and go to sleep again. In the morning the doctor came to see her. He shook his head saying, "She is quite delirious, poor thing—out of her mind: she will not live much longer." The Vicar was then sent for, because her mother thought her end was so near. He came, and when he heard the child say her sins were pardoned, and her soul saved, he too thought she was out of her mind, and recommended a wet towel to be applied to her head immediately.

She did not die, nor go out of her mind either; but remained happy, and recovered from her illness. Not meeting with sympathy in this experience, she kept it to herself, and in course of time her happy feelings faded away. For fifty years she had not told any one of her conversion. No wonder she was dejected, and often felt unhappy! While she was speaking to me, I observed her face lighting up with animation; she declared that once more she was happy. Bearing this testimony was like a new conversion to her: and this time she determined to let every one know what the Lord had done for her soul. She had many opportunities of telling her story to the various customers who frequented her shop.

Better late than never. Our experiences are not given to us merely for ourselves, but for the benefit of others also. When God lights a candle, He does not intend that it should be hid under a bed, but set on a candlestick, that all who come into the house may see the light. We should never be ashamed or afraid to bear testimony, even though we stand alone.

This woman had a very conspicuous advertisement in her shop, which attracted attention directly you entered. It was printed in red, blue, green, and gold letters, gorgeously framed and glazed. It announced that she was "sole agent" in that part of the country for Messrs. Huntley & Palmer. She did not sit down and cry because no one else sold biscuits for that great firm; on the contrary, she counted it a privilege that every one who wanted them must come to her. I have often quoted this old lady when people have told me that they had no privileges—that they stood alone in their parish. Sole agents for Christ should let their light shine, and all the brighter if the place is dark.

The little maid of Israel we read of in 2 Kings v., was a lone captive in a Syrian land. She was without "privileges;" and yet her testimony was the means of saving her master Naaman, while Gehazi, who lived in the blaze of "privileges," was turned into a leper.

At Christmas time we had a public tea. At the meeting afterwards, I told the people that I had been preaching to them for many months, and that now it was their turn to speak to me, and tell what the Lord had done for them during that time.

Our friend "Lydia" of the shop spoke well. She said, that as far as she knew she had been "sole agent" for the Lord in that village for many years, but had never given her testimony before: she was thankful for the present opportunity. I was also thankful to add that she was no longer a sole witness for God, as there were others who could tell of the Lord's goodness to them, if they would. Several persons did so, and gave clear testimony of their salvation.

After these a tall young man stood up and spoke. He looked round the room, and then up at the ceiling, as if to verify the place. He said—

"Yes, yes, this is the very room—I came to school here when I was a little boy. We had a kind governess. She used to say, 'If you are a good boy, God will bless you; but if you're bad, He will send you to a bad place.' I believed what she said, and tried to be good; but I could not help being naughty sometimes. Then I expected God would punish me; but He did not. As I grew up and went among other boys, I became more and more wicked. Sometimes I was afraid to go to sleep in the dark, for fear God would take me away. The older I grew the more hardened I was. I used to say, 'I don't care if God does punish me. There will be lots of others with me, and I'll bear it as well as they do.' At last I began to think there is no God; or if there is, He doesn't care whether I do right or wrong. When I became a man I was out-and-out bad. I swore; got drunk; and did all kinds of wicked things. I was the terror of the village; especially when I was drunk, which was very often. I used to laugh at my old fears about God; and jeer at people who feared Him, for I said, 'There is nothing to fear—the Bible is all nonsense!'

"A month ago I heard some people talking about the new Vicar and his preaching. Thought I to myself, 'On Sunday morning I will remain in the church tower during the service, and hear the sermon.' Before it was over, I was brought under deep conviction. I never knew God's true character before. God is love—not anger. He loves me; and what is more, He wishes to save me. I used to think He was watching His opportunity to catch and destroy me. I was astonished at the mistake I had made, and felt very sorry; so I knelt down in the tower where I was, and asked God to have mercy on my soul. In the evening after the service, I came to the meeting in this room, and found peace. Thank God, I was born here. Friends, never tell your children to be good, but tell them to ask God to make them so."

Another man who was converted bore his testimony also. He said he could not rest for thinking of the people in his village and neighbourhood. They were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. He longed to do them good, but did not know how to go about it. Mr. Haslam told him to ask God, "What wouldst Thou have me to do?" "I did so; and after this it came to my mind to write down some notes of his sermon; and then go and preach it again as well as I could. I am doing so every Sunday now, and several evenings in the week besides; and, thank God, He is giving me much blessing."

Our church services were well attended, but some of the leading people in the place did not sympathize with me or my efforts; consequently the poorer people did not listen with as much interest as they might have done. In spite of this drawback, we had cases of conversion now and then; and the Lord did not leave me without encouragement.

There was one sick man in the village, who was more like a corpse than any living person I have ever seen. He was blind, speechless, and so paralyzed as to be unable to move either hand or foot. He had been in this condition for nine years. Though he could not speak or see, yet he could hear, and understand what was said to him. This avenue to his soul being open, I told him of God's love in giving His Son to die for him, and of salvation through the blood of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit. I believe that poor man was saved. His wife, who interpreted his signs, assured me of the change in his soul. If I had come to Little Missenden for the salvation of this one poor sufferer alone, it was worth the coming.

Very different was another case I will mention—that of a young man who was full of life and vigour. He was leading a useless and aimless life, riding about the place, and smoking all day long. He lounged into church sometimes in the afternoons: or he may have done so regularly; but if so, I had not observed or noticed him. One Monday morning he came to my study, and throwing his hat carelessly down, took a seat. With a long deep sigh he said, "I am very miserable."

I asked, "What is it about? what can I do for you?"

He said, "I don't know. You seem to know all about me; I cannot guess who has informed you. I would give a good deal to find out. Some of the things you mentioned happened years ago; and some only lately."

I said, "God knows all about you. He tells me what to say."

"How you must despise me! You might just as well have called out my name in church yesterday; for every one seemed to know who you meant. Some even turned round and looked at me, while you were speaking."

"Now," I said, "I think it is time for us to go to business. My instructions are to open your eyes; to turn you from darkness to light; and to bring you from the power of Satan to God, that you may receive forgiveness of sins. When a man's eyes are opened, he sees and knows that he is lost, and that there is nothing between him and hell. If you were to die as you are, where would you go?"

"Ah," he replied, "I know only too well. I have known this for nearly three weeks."

"Why did you not come to me before?"

"I have been to your gate three or four times, but could not sum up courage to come in. I thought it would be so foolish to tell you my fears. You would think I had committed murder, or gone out of my mind. I have prayed, and read the Bible; but it makes me feel worse and worse. I have been trying to live a better life; and this does not satisfy me. On Sunday I heard what you said about the house that was built on sand."

I interrupted him, saying, "Do you understand now about building on the Rock?"

"Yes," he said with a smile; "I think I see, that instead of doing my best, I ought to rest on the finished work of Christ."

"Have you done this?"

"I have tried; but do not feel any better."

"Waiting to feel," I said, "is a device of the devil to keep you from salvation. It is surprising how he tries every one with that device, and hinders many. If you believe that Christ died for you, you should thank Him for it."

"How can I thank Him, if I do not feel saved?"

"My dear man," I said, "I do not want you to thank Him for what you feel, but for what He did. Did He die for you, or did He not? If He did, then thank Him; tell Him, if you like, how unworthy you are to do so; but thank Him nevertheless."

"Unworthy enough," he muttered; "He will see what a hypocrite I am, and send me away."

"No," I replied, "a hypocrite is a person who thanks when he does not mean it; but you mean it, and yet do not give thanks. Thank Him as well as you can, till you can thank Him better. We should give thanks with the best members that we have! The wall is salvation; but the gate is praise. 'This is the gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise Thee; for Thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation' (Ps. cxviii. 20, 21). Praying is like knocking at a door; and thanking God is like going in when it is opened. Come, let us thank Him for His love in giving His Son to die for you."

As we did so, the young man looked up and said, "I feel better."

"Oh, never mind your feelings," I replied; "thank and praise God. Say, 'Glory be to God, Jesus died for me.'"

Soon he came into joy and liberty, and exclaimed, "It is wonderful, wonderful! I am saved; I am sure I am!"

After this we took a walk together; and as we mounted the high ground, he looked back into the valley where stood the church and vicarage. "Ah," he said, "I little knew why I was brought here; I thought it the dullest place in creation. Now I thank God for directing my steps thither."

This gentleman made it his business to visit the cottagers, and talk to them about their souls. Being a pretty good hand at drawing, he sketched some illustrations with which to enforce his words. He was impressed with the idea, that the first thing to be done is to show people the broad road which leads to destruction, before telling them of the narrow one which leads to life—that the sinner needs to see himself *lost* before he can appreciate the Saviour.

One of my word illustrations he made into a sketch. In the foreground was represented a garden of delight, where many persons of all ages were taking their pleasure. In the back-ground was a high rock with an archway, which grew narrower and narrower, till at last it became a dark tunnel. At the further end of the tunnel there was an opening, in which stood a skeleton with a scythe, and through the bones of this ghastly figure were to be seen flames. "Look," he said, pointing to his picture, "the garden represents the world, and its pleasures; the archway, sickness; and the tunnel, the death-bed. See, it leads to death, and to flames beyond; you had better turn and seek salvation, before it is too late!" This picture and others like it had the desired effect in awakening souls, who were one by one led to Christ.

My short sojourn in this place was not for nought, though I only went there till the church in London was vacant.

CHAPTER XXX.

Curzon Chapel.

1872.

WHEN I had been at Little Missenden about twelvemonths I received a letter from Earl Howe, to say that Curzon Chapel would be vacant at Michaelmas. I accepted this incumbency, and made arrangements to fulfil the duties of it from that time; though I could not conveniently give up the living I held just then.

In the course of October 1872 I commenced my ministrations in London. It was a day to be remembered, and one which made a lasting impression in my memory. There were from fifty to sixty people present in a church which could accommodate a thousand. Some of this number were personal friends, who had come that morning to welcome me to London. Indeed, I needed all the welcome, and a good deal of cheer.

After the service a lady and gentleman, dressed in deep mourning, came into the vestry and thanked me for my sermon. Then the lady told me that her late daughter had received blessing under my preaching in Paris. Just before her death, this daughter had made the mother promise that she would hear Mr. Haslam as soon as she had the opportunity. She and her son-in-law, the husband of the deceased daughter, had accordingly come to hear me on this, the first day of my ministry. I was interested in these persons, without knowing who they were. After a few questions, I said, "I suppose your dear daughter did not intend you merely to be hearers of the Word, but doers?" They neither of them made a reply. I continued, "Perhaps you are both believers in the Lord Jesus?" The lady hesitated. It may be she was not accustomed to such close dealing; or, perhaps like too many, she had never before been asked a direct question on the subject of her soul's salvation. Her answers did not satisfy me; so, after a few words of explanation about the character of *living faith*, I prayed with them. They thanked me warmly, and went away, though not for long. In the afternoon they came again to the church, and in the course of the week took four or five pews for themselves and their household. They remained with me to the last.

The same good effect and result was by no means produced on another personage who had been accustomed to "sit in that chapel." He had been as one of the pillars of it, and his daughter took much interest in the singing. He was very much disturbed by the doctrine he heard, and did not come again that day. The following Sunday morning he put in an appearance as usual. This time he was even more disturbed, and went away with the determination to leave the church; which he did. Not content with going himself, and taking away his family, he influenced six other personages to resign their pews. Shortly afterwards, he was observed by some friends of his at another church. They were surprised, for he had often urged them to attend Curzon Chapel. They desired to know why he had left. "Oh," he replied, "there is a madman there now; I cannot listen to him. I heard him for two Sundays, and have had enough of it. He is quite mad; he says his sins are pardoned!"

His friends, not being satisfied with the ministry they were attending, having their curiosity sufficiently aroused, ventured to Curzon Chapel the very next Sunday. It happened they agreed with this madman so fully, that they determined to leave the other church and settle in this one. One after another they in like manner became "mad;" the father, mother, sons, and daughters. They still remain a consistent and happy family, rejoicing in the Lord, and losing no opportunity of doing good.

A few Sundays after, another family of position and influence found their way to Curzon Chapel. There, I believe, the Lord blessed them. They also remained to the last, and were a great help and cheer to me in many ways. The younger members of these two families took a room near the church for the benefit of some of the neglected hundreds who lived in the back streets of this wealthy neighbourhood. In this room they convened meetings for singing and speaking, and were much encouraged in their efforts.

These tokens of blessing were no small support to me in the beginning of my ministry, for which I was deeply grateful.

Still, for all this, I was very cheerless, and unsatisfied. It was a desolate time of year too in Mayfair. The streets were silent and empty, and the days getting darker and shorter, as well as damp and foggy. The great houses were shut up, and I was informed that if any of the owners were at home they lived in the back parts, for fear it should be supposed they were so unfashionable as to be in town at such a time. Housekeepers and housemaids were for the most part in sole possession of the mansions which looked so lonely with shutters shut, and blinds drawn down.

I struggled on as well as I could till after Christmas, when I began to think of improving the appearance of the chapel. There was indeed room for some improvement. I cannot well describe the general dingy appearance of this place of worship. The pews were high, and stained with a very dark colour, as were also the heavy gallery, the pulpit, and the reading-desk. Lord Howe, who manifested a lively interest in the matter, took me to see St. George's Church, Hanover Square, where the pews had been cut down. He desired that those at Curzon Chapel might be treated in the same way, and undertook to bear the expense.

The carpenters were soon set to work to lower the high pews, and while they were thus employed, painters and gilders were busy painting and decorating the galleries in a lighter colour. On examining the old pulpit, which had been set up when the church was built, in Queen Anne's time, we found it was made of oak, with inlaid panels. Instead of painting it, therefore, we had it scraped and varnished. Before the middle of February the church presented a very different appearance, and was as attractive now, as it had been dismal before.

At this time of year the Houses of Parliament are opened, and the members come to town, bringing many others with them. We were in readiness to receive such of the great folks among them as belonged to our congregation. Many of these were taken by surprise at the altered appearance of the church. Some were much pleased; others equally displeased. One said it "was like a music hall," another (because the pews had been cut down fourteen inches) that it "was like sitting out of doors;" he could not go there any more. One thought it was most distracting to see your neighbours so close and so plainly. Others wondered what was coming next in this age of sudden changes. They imagined this was only the thin end of the wedge; they were sure that something bad would follow. They also observed that I preached in a surplice: moreover, they did not quite agree with the kind of preaching. This, after all, was the head and front of the dissatisfaction, though it was wrapped up in so many and various excuses. For one reason and another many were removing their books and hassocks, and taking themselves off to other churches, where they could "hear with greater comfort." Some discovered that eleven o'clock was too early to begin the service, though I had made no alteration. To please them I changed the time to half-past eleven. Then came a great lord and said, "You give us a very bad character before the public. It would appear as if we were all late on Sunday mornings. I breakfast at eight o'clock, and much prefer the service at eleven." As this lord was a great man, and one who had always sat in this church, and his father before him, we deferred to him, and again reverted to the original time, which was really more convenient.

Then, the service was too long—would I omit the Litany and have it in the afternoon? This was a reasonable request, to which I complied. Then I received a message to say that Lady So-and-so and her sister, who had worshipped in Curzon Chapel all their lives, without finding any fault, were obliged to read the Litany at home to themselves. It was a great grievance—intolerable: they must go elsewhere!

At last we came to the real cause of all these troubles—the sermons. They were "so exciting" (I only wish they had been); they were too personal, too simple, too long, and so on. "How long shall I be, my lord?" "Ten minutes." "Why, it would take me that time to get your lordship's attention; and it would be like mocking you, to let you go then." "No, sir, sermons" (as if this lord knew more about sermons than his humble servant), "sermons, sir, should be short, sharp, and decisive."

I must say, I tried to be *decisive;* and I believe this was the cause of affront. Perhaps if I had been sharper than I was, instead of wrapping up some of my words for fear of offence, I might have been more blessed of God. As to "being short," if I let my congregation out at half-past twelve punctually, I thought I did very well. The fact is, I did all I could to please the great folks; and was very unwilling to do or say anything to drive them away.

One great man came to church, with his daughter, on a Sunday morning, and looked astonished to see his pew cut down like the rest. After a moment's pause, he said audibly, as if thinking aloud, "I like this! Great improvement! Very good! very good!" On Monday morning, however, he sent for his cushions and books, and so shook off the dust of his feet against us.

Another day a nobleman called to have his name taken off the book, and give up his pew. The clerk in attendance asked whether he wished to take sittings. "Oh dear, no," he replied; "the people are all leaving, are they not?"

"Not at all, sir," said the clerk; "some are going, but others are coming. The fact is, sir, we are going to work in earnest now, and must clear out the rubbish."

The nobleman laughed exceedingly, and said, "Oh then, take me out; I am rubbish."

The clerk looked at the number of his pew: seeing his name, and who he was, he said, "Oh no, my lord, I did not mean you: I cannot take your lordship's name off; you are not rubbish."

He was amused, and consented to let his name remain. What is more, he came to church, and ultimately received blessing.

Notwithstanding this, and some other exceptions, certainly the coronets were making off one by one. People were expected to take a side either for God or the world. If the latter, they were told it was all the heaven they would ever have. The warning was given plainly enough, and was evidently well understood.

One gentleman left because his daughters declared they "could not bear that man!" The daughter of another gentleman was not permitted to come, because her father did not approve of my teaching. I look back upon this time, and think it was much honour to have been so estimated of men, though I feel that I did not speak half so clearly as I should have done. It was a mistake; for I tried, *in my wisdom*, to do something with my congregation, instead of wholly trusting God.

The secret of popularity is to me a great mystery. What is it that draws people to some ministers, and not to others? It is not some one particular qualification; for popular men are diverse, and very different from one another. Some who say nothing, and do less, have a wonderful following; others have a great following in consequence of possessing a clear voice and attractive manner, though the matter is very diffuse. Some are far too clever to be understood by a quarter of their hearers; and yet they are highly approved and run after.

I could not resist going after some of my runaways to see the places and hear the persons of their choice. Some went to high church; more to broad church; but most to the so-called "evangelical" or low. In the first we heard nothing but the theology of "doing." You were to do this, observe that, and abstain from the other. Prayer was recommended; as if all religion and devotion consisted in saying prayers so many times a day. Blind Bartimæus prayed by the wayside, because he was blind. But when, according to his faith, he received eye-sight, he followed Jesus, glorifying God. This is the character of Christian life. A Christian is not a begging, but a praising, soul. He needs to pray as much as he needs to breathe; but our life does not consist of breathing merely. The Apostle thus exhorts: "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. v. 16–18).

As to the broad churchman, he made some startling statements which certainly kept us awake, wondering what was coming next. "The Bible is not inspired! It is not a book to be relied upon. There are many assertions in it which modern science has proved to be false. Nothing should be believed which is not understood." This was indeed bringing down the wisdom of God to the mind of man, instead of bringing up the mind of man to the wisdom of God. The fact is, we must believe the Word of God before we can understand it; we must do His will, before we can know His doctrine.

As to the low or evangelical preacher, he was very wordy, and equally dead. He pleased his hearers; and they pleased him, though they remained unconverted. There was a great deal of the *word* of the Spirit, but nothing about the *work*. His congregation might truthfully say —"We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost!"

Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes they were called in the Lord's days, whatever they are called now. Their people respectively loved to have it so. The demand created the supply, and kept it up. If popularity could be had in all or any of these ways, I would cheerfully decline the honour. If I desired a following, it was only that I might lead souls to Christ; but if that could not be, then let me have none.

I had a few staunch friends; but I cannot say I had popularity. Notoriety was nevertheless attributed to me. One titled lady with her granddaughter (who was a very unmanageable young lady), was posting off on foot to the ministry of Rev. S—— B——, but could not find his church. Meeting a gentleman in Piccadilly, she asked whether he could direct them. "By heavens!" he exclaimed, "I cannot do so." "But," continued the lady, "he is a very remarkable man—very extraordinary."

"Oh then," said the gentleman, "go to Curzon Street; that is the place. You will find him there."

She did so, and her granddaughter never heard anything that so rapt her attention—God spoke to this wild one, and to her elder relative as well. They both came again in the evening; and after service invited me to luncheon the next day. I went, and was met on the stairs by the young lady, who said, "After grandmamma has spoken to you, I should like to say a few words." The elder lady was awakened, and eventually brought to the Lord; the younger had found peace the evening before. Thus this notoriety was some good to some one!

Another titled lady, without knowing of my notoriety, was driven into the chapel by a shower of rain during service time. She was struck with the sermon she heard; and on going out asked the usual questions as to the name of the preacher, and where he came from. On being told that he was the stated minister of the place, she went direct to her friend the patron (Earl Howe), and said to him, "My dear George, where ever did you pick up that man at Curzon Chapel?—he is very wonderful. He looked at me as if he read me through and through. Have you told him anything about me?"

This lady took her place near the pulpit, and never failed to come twice a day all through the season; and all the seasons I was there. She used to say to those who had gone away from Curzon Chapel, and to others who would not come there, "Ah, you cannot stand it: you are afraid!" She evidently "stood it" without fear, and I trust received some good; but being a great lady, she never told her experience, at least to me.

One afternoon I called upon her ladyship, and found her just going out, dressed in full feather, to a worldly garden-party. "See here I am," she said; "I am obliged to do these things—I suppose we shall have it next Sunday. Oh, the world! the world! the world!" However, it happened that I had other things to speak of, and left the worldlings to their choice in peace.

In this age of divided opinions, when diverse views are held and maintained by equally learned and great men, I did not venture to make statements of *my* views. I even told my hearers that they had as much right to views as I had. But FACTS are not views, or opinions; and God's revealed facts are not optional or open to question. We must accept them; or it will be the worse for us if we do not. The writings of the Apostle John abound in simple statements of great and eternal facts. His Gospel, with its narration of undeniable truths, was written that we might *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, we might *have life* through His name (see John xx. 31). And his Epistles were written that we, who believe on the name of the Son of God, may *know* that *we have* eternal life (see 1 John v. 13). "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v. 10–12). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John ii. 15–17).

Dwelling on these and similar declarations with which Scripture abounds, I illustrated and confirmed them by examples and personal experience. Thus doing, I found myself above the reach of contradiction or argument. Moreover, the ground I stood upon was as strong and enduring as the unchangeable Word itself.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The London Season.

1873–5.

IN the last chapter I told how I began my ministration at Curzon Chapel in the midst of gloom, fog, and damp, as to the atmosphere outside, and in dreariness and desolation with regard to the congregation inside. In spite of these obstacles and others I have mentioned, such as the withdrawal of old seatholders, the Lord gave me His blessing together with His presence. Some were gathering round me who appreciated the Gospel message which I delivered week by week, and their number was increasing.

After the chapel had been beautified, and as the season was approaching, I had indefinable expectations. People had talked so much about the nobility and gentry who came up to town at this time, that I could not help wondering what accessions I should have to my congregation.

In due course the spring advanced; the days became brighter and longer; and the mansions which had been closed all the winter were once more opened. The neighbourhood of Mayfair, which had been so lonely, now presented a more lively appearance; but I cannot say we had as yet a commensurate reviving at Curzon Chapel.

After Easter, it was even more manifest that this part of London was filling. The whole place was alive and in a state of excitement and whirl. Pretty well, I thought, for people who profess to "hate excitement." This whirl and rush continued increasing as the season advanced, all day and all night; often more in the night than in the day. The drawing-rooms, levees, and assemblies commanded people's attention. Then there were the operas and theatres; also balls and parties, which were visited by people who went from one to another in the hours of the night, much as if they were paying "morning calls." This kept up a continual furore in the place. The contrast between the season and the time before the season, was as great as that between the blaze of summer and the depth of winter.

As if to throw oil on the fire, there came the races, and beyond all, that great Derby day! For this most important occasion, the West End was deserted; the Houses of Parliament closed; and excitement was on tiptoe to know who was to be the winner of the Derby! There were other runnings of horses also; but these were not of such moment to the general public. Only persons who were ardent admirers of the horse, or perhaps delighted in the mental strain of gambling and betting, took an interest in these. In another fortnight or so came the Ascot races —the cream of such entertainments! Here royalty and aristocracy met; and the strain and pressure of fashionable excitement had arrived at its desired climax. Judging from the jaded and tired appearance of the votaries of pleasure and fashion, one might say it had not come too soon!

During this surprising and energetic rush, we cannot wonder that those who came to church on Sunday morning were tired and distrait. No wonder if eleven o'clock was too early, and short sermons were in request during "the season!" Certainly ten minutes could not suffice to recal attention to sacred things on the part of persons whose minds had wandered so far into the world during the week. Doubtless it was vexatious to some of them to be forced to think upon serious and eternal subjects, in the midst of the vortex of pleasure and the engagements of fashionable society.

At the height of "the season," our morning services were pretty well thronged with strangers for a few weeks. I could not help observing from the pulpit the way in which many of them looked at one another, from time to time, as much as to say, "Did you ever hear the like?" I told them plainly, that there are two conditions upon which the god of this world permits his votaries to enjoy themselves. One was—You must not pray: and the other—You must not give up the world. In compliance with these conditions, they were set at liberty to enjoy themselves to the full all day, and all night too if they pleased; on Sunday as well as Saturday. Some of the great ones went in for their full liberty, and had no qualms of conscience about it, and no fears either. They rather resented remonstrance or any check. As if enamoured of destruction, they seemed determined to go all the way, even if they lost their souls for it. Perhaps they felt that persons in their position *must* go on, whether they would or no!

After a few Sundays the congregation began to decrease, not because the preaching was too severe—no; it was said they liked it! Those who did not had already left. The numbers were declining because Ascot races were passed, and "the season" was beginning to flag. It went on flagging till Goodwood races—then it was over! The Houses of Parliament, to be sure, were still sitting; and the members went on laboriously working day and night to complete the business of the country, until the time of grouse-shooting. Then the West End of London was left again to its solitude and quietness. "The season" was gone like a troubled dream!

Is it true that the streets were so thronged with vehicles a few weeks ago, and the parks choked with carriages and horses? Were thousands of persons to be seen assembled in Hyde Park, gazing at the aristocracy and gentry, sometimes gratified with beholding royalty as well? Yes, it had been so. Now it was as a thing of the past: the crowds had come, and they were gone—they disappeared as quickly as they came. Such is life—worldly life. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

The long-expected London season was over, and I had scarcely said half my say! A fashionable church, as they call it, is as great a sham as the fashionable world, if not a greater, and far more trying. The fact is, that the people who come up to London at this time, really live and exercise their influence in other places. They come to town just to meet one another; and with this they combine pleasure, matrimonial arrangements, and the business of legislation. Their time and thoughts are thus fully occupied; and too often their minds are quite distracted with the multiplicity of their engagements.

What had I been sent here for? I had been among the poorest and most degraded in Bath; now I had come to the neighbourhood of the greatest and richest people in the world! The one were eager to get money, ever so little of it; the other to spend it, ever so much, sometimes to squander more than they had! As far as their souls were concerned, or eternity, these were matters of no consideration. There were, of course, exceptions in both places. Some loved good things, and desired them; but they were sorely beset by their respective circumstances. Extremes meet. What were those in the lowest classes to do, if they did not follow their crafts and devices? What were the highest to do, if they did not follow the fashion and etiquette of society? In both instances, their devotion to God was, in some respects, secondary to circumstances. For this reason, they did not enjoy the happiness and liberty belonging to the Christian profession. If God is not first and above all, He cannot reign. To have the joy of Christ, we must come out for Him altogether, and be separate. To do this, was to some very hard; and to others, seemed altogether impossible.

Knowing what to expect the following year, I thought I would devise something novel and attractive in the way of special services. By this means, I hoped to reach some of the worldly ones; for I did not believe in their alleged dislike to excitement. There was some talk of a Mission in London, to which five hundred Missioners were to be invited. I thought this would do very well; but, unhappily for me, it was fixed to take place early in February. However, it was better than nothing, and I availed myself as much as possible of the opportunity, determining besides, to have a proper Mission at my church in "the season."

By way of preparation for the forthcoming effort, the Friday previous to its commencement was set apart for intercession and instruction on Mission work. The clergy and their Missioners were invited to meet at St. Paul's Cathedral that day, and I was asked with a few others to address them. The subject entrusted to me was "Faith;" and it was arranged that I should preach immediately after the regular afternoon service.

On my arrival at the Cathedral I saw many of the clergy walking about in cassock and girdle; some with birettas, and some with capes. They appeared to be very pleased with themselves, and the Catholic or Romish appearance they presented. Doubtless they desired to look like real sacrificing priests; though they were ministers of a Church which has repudiated such priests, with their sacrifices and altars too. Obviously these gentlemen had it in their hearts to utilize the London Mission for promoting the Catholic revival, and by its means to recommend confession and absolution as necessary to salvation. I, on the other hand, regarded the Mission as an opportunity given by God for reviving the real spiritual work of the Reformation—an opportunity for making our Church a more living protest against the Christ-denying legality of the Romish communion.

It pleased God at the Reformation to convert, so to speak, the Church of England, and teach her the true and Scriptural plan of working *from* life, instead of working *for* life. Thus a great and impassable gulf was opened between our Church and that of Rome; but these innocents seemed to ignore the fact—that is, if they ever knew it. They were all for reviving ante-Reformation practices, and for undoing the blessed work which had been wrought for us. They were for leading us back into the bondage from which we had been freed.

I thought to myself, You shall hear something about this, when I am up in that pulpit. It was not a pleasant prospect; nor was it a cheerful time when it came. However, at the proper moment, I found myself sailing along in the white-robed procession from the vestry, and was conducted to the great pulpit in the nave with all due honour.

I gave out the hymn, which was well sung, and then repeated some collects, in which I emphatically prayed for the true Catholic Church, and all who professed and called themselves Christians, that they *might be led into the way of truth.* After another hymn, I announced my text, which I took from Heb. xi. 1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." I commenced by saying, that without faith it is impossible to please God. Then, referring to the words of the previous preacher, I said, I quite agree with what we have just heard—that unless we have been reconciled to God ourselves, we cannot properly or effectually be ministers of reconciliation to others. We should be witnesses, as well as ministers, of God's truth. An unconverted ministry is a curse to any Church—and such a ministry in a Mission worse than useless. Faith makes us omnipotent, if we work in the line of the Spirit's operation. As scientific men succeed in their efforts by using the forces of nature according to her laws, so spiritual men, following the Word of God, are enabled by the Spirit of God to do the work which He has given them. I set this truth before my hearers for evident reasons. We have not to stand between Christ and the sinner; but simply to hold up the Lord Jesus Christ as the object of faith, and to tell out that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. I reminded them that our martyrs sealed their testimony with their blood. Why were our Reformers burnt? Why did Ridley, the bishop of this Cathedral, suffer martyrdom? Was it not because he testified that salvation is by simple faith—that is, by direct and personal transaction with God, without the intervention of priest or sacrament? Was it not because he declared boldly that Christ is not on the Romish altar, but in the believer's heart?

At this point, a man in a cassock prostrated himself before the "high altar," as he would call it: not a few went down on their knees, and putting their hands together, prayed of their charity, as I suppose, for the soul of the heretic in the pulpit. At the same time at least fifty or sixty others rose up from their seats and walked away (not very noiselessly) into the transept, beyond hearing. The sounds reverberated in the dome a long way overhead, so that I was obliged to wait till silence was restored before I could proceed with my instruction. Then I repeated to my less refractory audience what I had just been saying, and continued my address. When the time was up, I gave out a hymn, and then closed with an extempore prayer and the benediction.

Descending from the pulpit, I was conducted to the vestry in due form. On arriving there I beheld a scene something like the camp of the Syrians (see 2 Kings vii. 5). "Behold, there was no man there!" The ground was strewn with surplices, hoods, and stoles, thrown down in haste; and the camp was deserted! The vergers regarded me with amazement, as if I were some uncouth monster from the country. Probably they had never had such a scene in that orderly place before. I came forth into the crowd alone, and had to bear the gaze of many, and the contemptuous looks of not a few. One high churchman in costume came up to me and said, "I respect you for faithfulness to your views; but I do not agree with them." I longed to show him that his Church doctrine in many cases is not Bible truth; but he was not disposed to talk.

One Evangelical clergyman, a friend of mine, looked dissatisfied. I said to him, "Well, did it do?"

"Do!" he rejoined, "it has done for you. You will never be asked to preach here any more."

"That may be," I replied; "but I would not have lost this opportunity for anything."

Another friend, who happened to be present, greeted me cordially, and thanked the Lord for my testimony. There were others also who congratulated me.

The London Mission proceeded as was arranged, and I took my part in it, preaching at three different churches. I have reason to think that my congregation at Curzon Chapel benefited, though we had no regular mission there at this time. Previous to this, I used to be regarded as a singular man, and unlike any one else. Now, "missions" were so openly recognised, and conversions so commonly spoken about, that my hearers were re-assured.

As the season of 1874 advanced, I called attention to the subject of our coming Mission in June. Prayer was asked; preparation made; and notices given; so that expectation was stirred. I invited my friend Rev. W. H. M. H. Aitken to conduct the Mission. He was not so well known then as he is now; nor were such efforts as well understood. Notwithstanding, it pleased God to send us a large congregation the first Sunday. We had a royal duke, and noblemen of every degree, with their families and servants. On one occasion Lord Beaconsfield (then Mr. Disraeli), also Mr. Gladstone, were present, though at different ends of the church.

The preacher's opening subject was the contrast between Ahab and Elijah. Fearlessly and powerfully he portrayed the great man and the poor prophet. There stood the king full of wrath, though restrained by fear, saying, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" And the prophet, calm and free in the peace and power of God, answering, "I have not troubled Israel: but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandment of the Lord" (1 Kings xviii. 17, 18). The one impotent in his greatness; the other powerful in his nothingness. The king, in position and influence, vainly struggling against God; Elijah, the man of God, rough and invincible. But he was "vulgar." This was something not to be endured. A man might be immoral, a gambler, in debt, and yet be recognized; but to be vulgar, was a thing altogether intolerable.

Elijah gave his challenge, and went to Mount Carmel. This was his text, "The God who answers by fire, let him be God." God did answer by fire; but Ahab for all that went away untouched. So also went away many of the congregation. One duke was heard to say, "Hang the fellow! he preached seventy minutes!" Nevertheless his grace said he would come and hear him again.

My friend was overwhelming in his eloquence, and with power he swayed the hearts of the great congregation.

The following Sunday he spoke with even greater force. This time he told of Herod and John the Baptist. He described the former as a vain, good-natured kind of man, who had some conscience, one who patronized John, and sent for him to come and preach in Jerusalem. Herod heard him gladly, and did many things; but would not part with his cherished sin; that was not to be touched he would not give that up!

It was a word in season, for if there was one thing, upon which even the most promising of my noble hearers stumbled, it was the whim, or crotchet, or hobby, if not something worse, upon which his lordship, or her ladyship, had set his or her mind. This must be done or granted, come what may!

Besides the services on Sunday, we had three every day in the week, which were increasingly attended!

The next season Mr. Aitken came again for a mission, and preached with unabated earnestness and zeal. By this time the congregation was more conversant with spiritual subjects; consequently the results were greater. Another circumstance, too, which greatly helped us to arrive at this very desirable state, was the visit of the American evangelists to the West End.

Messrs Moody and Sankey, who had been working in the provinces during the winter months, came to London in the early spring; and during the season of 1875, they held meetings in the Opera House at the Haymarket. On their arrival there, I commended them, and announced from my pulpit, that if any of the congregation required tickets, I should have much pleasure in procuring the same for them. The vestry was besieged, and the messages and letters I received kept me busy for several weeks. I distributed more than three hundred cards of admission weekly, at the West End, chiefly for the reserved seats. I had the satisfaction of seeing many of my people, and others with them, regular in their attendance at these meetings. Their eagerness to come again and again, and the rapt attention with which they followed the speaker, showed that God was speaking to them.

One nobleman remarked to another in the house, "I have been to hear that fellow Moody!" "Indeed," was the reply, "how do you like him?" "Oh, very well, very well. What is more, I am reconciled to Haslam now. I understand him better—I believe the man means well—I mean to stick to him."

By one means and another, it pleased God to give me a hearing in Mayfair; and He also gave blessing with His Word; though the effect was not so manifest as in the lower grades of society.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Resting-Place.

1876.

It takes at least three years to gather a permanent congregation in London. We sometimes hear of a crowd coming together the first season, which is too often dispersed in the second. It is always better in this, as in other things, to begin low and rise high, than to begin high and descend gradually to the less and less. Besides this, it should be known, that in London congregations are more eclectic than parochial, and that they are altogether capricious. Very often you see people coming away from their parish church, while others from a distant parish are going there. After a time people choose where they will worship and "hear."

Before the beginning of the fourth London season I found myself supported by a good, steady congregation. For all this, "my lord" said, "Nobody goes there;" and "my lady" remarked, "I can tell, by the appearance and walk of the people as they pass, whether they are going to Curzon Chapel or elsewhere." It was becoming quite a settled matter what, and who, the people were that attended my ministry.

There is a law in nature by which all things find their resting-place; and I think this law applies to persons as well as to things. I used to say, that I had found my resting-place for life at Curzon Chapel, that it was made for me and I for it. Here I had no parochial charge to engage me; and my proper congregation for the most part did not require my close attention, excepting for four or five months in the year. I had therefore much freedom for Evangelistic work all over the country, and something to come back to when I returned to town.

My vestry was a place of great interest, for thither came friends, Sunday after Sunday, from all parts of the kingdom. One day a gentleman, snowed with years, paid me a visit there. "Well," he said, "I should have known you anywhere. How are you?" I did not recognize my friend. No wonder, it was no less than twenty-five winters since we had met; and, besides this, I had heard that he was dead. When I told him so, he said, "Not at all, not at all; I have been living in the North, following you about year after year, and praying for you continually." Almost every week some one cropped up, and sometimes more than one, to shake hands and renew acquaintance. Spiritual children from all parts came forward to report themselves, and their progress, or their troubles, as the case might be.

One Sunday morning I had been preaching about the will of God. I said there was too often a mistake in the minds of Christians upon the subject. They thought it was their duty to resign themselves with as much cheerfulness as possible to circumstances pressed on them by the Providence of God; that they ought, whether prostrated by affliction or otherwise, still to appear content and submissive. Instead of this, I explained to them that true resignation consists in rising up into the will of God with thankfulness, instead of bowing under it with submission. Our language should be, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job i. 21). "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good" (1 Sam. iii. 18). The Lord knows how to prepare us for what He is preparing for us.

After the sermon who should come into the vestry, to thank me for this word, but a valued and dear friend, who was in trouble. He asked me to walk a little way with him; then putting his arm into mine, he said, "The Lord knew I was there this morning, though you did not, and once again He has spoken to me by you." Then in the quietest way he said, "I am told that I must die in three months."

Fine, strong, active man as he was, the doctors had discovered an internal tumour, which sooner or later, they said, must prove fatal. He continued, "They tell me that an operation may be necessary; but they are not sure it will be successful, and I may die under it. I have made the necessary arrangements in case of my death. It is all settled, my funeral, and everything."

I felt a thrill go through my whole frame, but I did not interrupt him.

He went on to say, "I was going home the other day with the sentence of death confirmed, when I was advised to see one more physician of note. This eminent man, after very minute and careful examination, said to him, "Have you a son? Is he of age? Are your affairs in good order? I mean, is it urgent that you should live two years or so longer?"

"No," was the answer; "I am ready, and not afraid to go."

The doctor sat back in his chair, and after a minute's pause said, "It is my opinion that there are nine chances to one against you; and the operation will be a very painful one. I do not recommend it!"

"I am quite ready to go," repeated my friend.

"Well," replied the cool physician, "I expect you will have to do so in three or four months at latest."

After having told me his sad case he said, "Now, I want you to come down and give us a week as soon as you can. Life is uncertain!"

How I loved and honoured him for speaking with such calm boldness and confidence!

On the Monday week following I went down to Norfolk, and duly arrived at Buckenham. My friend was kindly present at the station to meet the train, and drove me along the familiar avenue to the ferry. Having crossed this, he proposed that we should walk the remaining two miles or more to his house, sending the luggage on before in the carriage.

I was surprised to hear this proposition, and amazed to see his activity and cheerfulness. "Can you walk so far?" I inquired.

"Oh yes, thank God, I am better. Indeed, my bad symptoms are gone away; I feel quite well and strong."

I could not help thanking God with him; for, to all appearance, he seemed as well and strong as ever I saw him.

He said, "I wish you could have been with us last Friday afternoon; we had a meeting that day in the drawing-room. I told the company that I was sentenced to death, and that, humanly speaking, there was no remedy—

that by the grace of God I had risen to His will. I added, 'It is no use praying for me, or my recovery; but pray for my family, that they may be guided and comforted—that they may not only be upheld, but that my removal may be blessed to them.' The friends assembled were taken by surprise, and moved to sympathy. Those who led in prayer were most urgent that my life should be spared; they were not disposed to let me go. One man," he said, naming an unusually silent individual, "pleaded earnestly, even with tears, that my life might be prolonged. After the meeting I took leave of my friends, who for the most part went away crying. But do you know," continued this dear man, "the next morning when I rose, I found that I was much better; my bad symptoms were all gone, and I could move and walk about without feeling pain, or even any inconvenience. I felt as free and well as ever I did in my life. So I continued all Saturday and yesterday. To-day I am perfectly well, and can walk with entire ease, thank God."

Indeed he did this with his usual vigour, so that I could scarcely keep up with him. On our arrival he did not appear in the least fatigued.

After dinner we drove, in a large party, to a meeting held in the Public Hall of a neighbouring town. Behind the platform was the following text, done in white letters upon crimson ground by his daughter: "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. v. 18). My friend appeared particularly bright and happy. Pointing to these words he said, "'In everything,' whether it be sorrow or joy,—'in everything,' give thanks!" At the close of his address he called on me to bear testimony. He said, "God raised you up from death once, and has now restored your sight; tell about His goodness."

I did so with much thankfulness, for my heart was very full in seeing him so well and so happy. The people assembled knew me, and had heard of my restoration to life from sentence of death many years before. Now I told them how that, since I had left Buckenham, I had been under sentence of blindness for the remainder of my days. I said, "No less than four physicians, whom I consulted about my sight, told me that I should lose it altogether; that they could do nothing for me. In answer to prayer, I was taken to another physician, who performed an operation; and, thank God, I can see now; I can see you; though I cannot see to read a book, I can read this text, and fully agree with what our dear friend has said respecting it."

Every evening until Saturday, when I was obliged to return to town, we had meetings for thanksgiving in various places. It was a pleasant, happy, and profitable week—the last I spent at that place.

One of these days I was driven over to dear old Buckenham. The Rectory looked as pretty as ever. I said, "I shall never cease to remember the dear friends who brought me here, or to thank them for it." The reply was, "Many thank God for having sent you here."

Three months after this time I was in Scotland; and there I heard that my friend was very ill. The doctors never believed in his supposed recovery; for, although he was free from pain, the deadly tumour was still there, and increasing in size, as they supposed it would. Before I could return to town the sad intelligence reached me that he was dead!

I went down to his house to attend the funeral. There I was told of the triumphant and happy testimony which he gave to the last, though he had suffered very great pain. His tenants and friends were invited to come and see him before he died. One hard old tenant came out of the sick chamber, and said to others who were waiting to go in, "Don't be afraid. I never saw the master so happy in my life." Then this hard man burst into tears.

The funeral was attended by hundreds, if not thousands. The coffin, covered with a crimson-and-white pall, was borne by tenants through the garden and woods to the church, which was situated in the Park. The path was lined with spectators, who were also mourners. It was a quiet autumnal day, the sun was shining brightly, and not a leaf was moving; but there seemed sadness in the air. The church bell tolled mournfully as we walked slowly along, singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving. My friend had himself selected these hymns for the occasion ; indeed, he had made every arrangement for his own funeral.

I did not take any part in the service, but when it came to the solemn parting words, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust"—and before the officials stepped forward to take away the coffin to its final resting-place in the Mausoleum, I was asked to say a few words. In anticipation of this sad duty, I had prepared some thoughts, but these all vanished, I know not where.

After giving utterance to a few sentences, my voice failed, and I was obliged to stop ; I could not recover myself, and was not ashamed to sob aloud. One or two other friends, with more self-control, gave good testimony of the life of him who had been taken from us. At the close of this solemn service, we sang another hymn and parted. It moves me to tears, even now, to record the scene. How many happy memories there are connected with that place, and the profitable Bible-readings we had in the house and under the shade of the beautiful trees! These readings did their work, and I believe cheered many believers on their way. It is not well to regret that they are passed : we should rather thank God that they ever were ; and praise Him for the good they did.

From this long digression we must return again to Curzon Chapel. That is a place of memories also.

I remember the names of the pew-holders, and think of the pews number by number. Doing so, I could tell something of God's dealings with the occupants of a great many of them, not a few of whom have, within the last few years, been called away. How some received the Word of God, and others resisted it. How some were drawn nearer to God, and others went farther off. How some were melted under the constraining influence of His love, and others maintained an imperturbable reticence. It was, and is, impossible to tell what effect the preaching of the Gospel had upon them.

Besides the Sunday services, I had a "Bible-reading," as it was called, on Tuesday afternoon, and also gave an address every Friday evening. I invited questions, and when they were sent, answered them as nearly as possible from the Word of God. In addition to this we had consecutive teaching on "Christian Life." This instruction was commenced the first year I came to Curzon Chapel, as I felt so strongly the importance of leading believers onward.

How many stop at Calvary, as if there was nothing more for them than to remain there till they are taken to heaven. This theology, of going from Calvary to heaven direct, is far too generally taught and accepted. It is true that the Saviour died; and a most important part of truth it is—as important as a foundation is to a house. Obviously, however, the foundation is not the house, any more than the unseen, though vital, root of a tree is the tree itself, which bears blossom and fruit.

I endeavoured to press home this teaching, in order that the Foundation Stone, laid once for all, might not be confused with the cleft Rock of Ages,—the believer's hiding-place. Truly the blessed Saviour died to save us; but it is equally true that He rose from the dead. Moreover, He ascended up on high, and is coming again in His glory.

The Apostle Paul testifies in his writings of a full Christ; and in the Epistle to the Corinthians, he tells us how God has placed us in Christ Jesus, and made Him unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (See 1 Corinthians i. 30.) In other words, Christ, in His crucifixion and death, is the wisdom of God for us; Christ, in His resurrection, is our righteousness or justification; Christ, in His ascension, is our sanctification; and Christ, in His coming again, is our redemption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies. A wondrous fourfold treasure in the golden casket of the Incarnation.

So far the Apostle tells of Christ *for us;* and in the Epistle to the Ephesians he goes on to tell about Christ *in us.*

When we believe in His death, our souls are quickened into spiritual vitality, just as the body of the Lord was quickened in the grave. When, as saved ones, we believe in the Risen Saviour, we are raised to newness of life in Him. When we believe in the Ascended Saviour, we sit in heavenly places in Him, and mind those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. We not only set our affection on things above; but, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, we are sanctified, to live the aggressive Christian life here on earth. We fight the good fight of faith, and work the work of God; yet not we, but Christ in us. When we believe in the coming of the Lord (which may happen at any moment) to change our mortal bodies, and make them glorious as His own, it has the effect of separating us from this world and attaching us to Himself.

Thus the Lord is set before us as a four-storied house; in which we may continually dwell. Too often believers occupy only the basement: consequently they are driven to all kinds of devices to make up for the higher parts of the house. For instance, instead of trusting in the *keeping* power of a Present, Living, Risen Christ, they trust to prayers, watchfulness, and resolutions of their own making. Instead of having the Sanctifying Spirit to dwell in them for service, they are led to ask God to help them to work, as if He intended them to be agents instead of instruments. Instead of the Christian's Hope, the Lord's coming for them, they endeavour to comfort themselves with the idea of dying and going to heaven.

Believers, who used to content themselves with the blessedness of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, were encouraged to believe that it was God's will they should be filled, even in this world. Those who were always begging as recipients, were taught how to live the higher life of giving, and to know, in their own experience, that it is "more blessed to give than to receive."

During these readings I was laid aside for eight weeks; but my mind was still occupied with these subjects, and I wrote a book, entitled, "The Threefold Gift of God.* In this work I set forth Jesus Christ as the object of Faith; the object of Hope; and the object of Love. The first, for salvation from the penalty and power of sin; the second, for salvation from its presence, by our being taken up to be with and like the Lord at His coming; and the third, for devotion and service while we remain on earth.

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* The increasing interest now manifested in the subject of the Lord's Second Coming, has led me recently to bring out a new and revised edition of this work, which, I trust, may, in some measure at least, meet the need of the present time: "THE THREEFOLD GIFT OF GOD." Partridge & Co.

Another way of putting some of these truths before my hearers, was by giving weekly lectures on Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." These proved both helpful and attractive. I illustrated the teaching of this remarkable book by stories within my own knowledge and experience.

To Milton it was given to illustrate the Word of God; to Shakespeare to hold up the glass to nature; but it was Bunyan's privilege to set forth, from his own experience, the work of the Divine Spirit in the hearts of men. His writings, therefore, I found to be very appropriate for my purpose, having it in my heart to lead the people forward in spiritual experiences.

It pleased God to own and bless these efforts, so that they were the means of much good to many people. They made a variety, and at the same time supplemented the ordinary teaching of the Sunday sermons. I have a very happy remembrance of these services, and the many kind words of encouragement I received from my hearers.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Not the Resting-Place.

1878.

I THOUGHT that I had found at Curzon Chapel a resting-place, where I was to labour to the end of my days. It suited me exactly, for besides having a promising congregation, I had much spare time and freedom for Evangelistic work all over the country. Still I cannot say that I was fully satisfied with the result of this desultory labour, or that I did not often long and desire to be bringing more souls to Christ. It is true that the Lord from time to time gave me the joy of leading sinners to Himself, and I also had many opportunities for building up believers. Nevertheless, I could not help looking now and then at the vast harvest-field outside my own little sphere. This made me restless to reach and win more souls for Jesus.

What is Gospel ministry, if it is not effectual to this end? and how can living people be content with only congregations and communicants? Surely TO WIN SOULS should be our chief end and aim, whether we be in a stationary position or otherwise. It is the great work, nearest the Father's heart; that for which He gave His Son, and the Son of God gave His life.

However, I was not master to dispose of myself, but only a servant; not an agent, but an instrument; and happy to be only as the voice of one speaking, and not the speaker Himself.

I had laboured hard and diligently to gather my congregation together, and was, as I have already said, in the midst of happy and prosperous work, when the sad news reached me that my friend and patron, Lord Howe, had been bereaved of his only child. This event was a great blow to his lordship. Doubtless he felt it all the more from being himself in an enfeebled state of health. Not many months after, he too was called away; and in less than twelve months Lady Howe followed.

The peerage has many a sad romance. Sadder far, and stranger than fiction, are some of the events of its history. One passes away; and another takes his place. Such is the uncertainty of life, and the vanity of human greatness!

Another succeeded to the earldom, who apparently cared nothing for spiritual matters or spiritual people. In a short time his lordship dismissed the various Scripture-readers and Bible-women, who had been employed on the estate by his predecessor. Supposing that I, the incumbent of Curzon Chapel, was something of the same grain—that is to say, of the same genus as a Bible-woman—he proposed to dismiss me likewise. It had somehow come to his mind, and could not be eradicated, that my appointment ceased at the death of the late Lord. His lordship was altogether impervious to reason or remonstrance. I protested that this was a real incumbency, under the Bishop's institution

—that on this consideration I had given up a permanent living, which was as good as four hundred a year, to take Curzon Chapel; and besides that, I had spent several hundred pounds (which my late patron said I might have put into my own pocket) to improve the chapel, and make it more acceptable to the congregation. His lordship could not see it; he had dismissed Bible-women, and Mr. Haslam must go too. In kind consideration, he would give me three months' notice; or, if I preferred it, I might give him three months. I declined this offer, and held on to my work.

The following year it came to this: the chapel is private property—his lordship can turn the key of it, or take off the roof, or turn it into a skating-rink. Then came a message to say, that great improvement of property was in contemplation in Curzon Street, which would be for his lordship's pecuniary benefit. Curzon Chapel is to be pulled down; but my lord is so unwilling to injure Mr. Haslam, that he will defer his own benefit for another year. I did not accept this notice to quit; and in reply, sent a vigorous remonstrance to his lordship, about pulling down the chapel for the sake of pecuniary benefit. To this I received no answer or even acknowledgment.

Shortly afterwards I announced to my congregation, that I had heard the chapel was to be pulled down. This intimation did not appear to touch them in the least—perhaps they did not believe it. As the time drew near, and I really thought of leaving, I was blamed for contemplating such a step. I do not think I should have entertained the idea, if the congregation had been more alive to the real state of the case.

Three months before the time named for the destruction of the building, I gave notice again to the seat-holders, as I was in duty bound; but this also was passed by, without any remark or expression of regret.

Such being the case, I accepted an invitation from my friend, Mr. Aitken, to join him in a Mission Society, which he had recently formed in memory of his father, the late Rev. R. Aitken. Having settled this, I announced to the patron that I would vacate Curzon Chapel at Midsummer 1878.

When it was really apprehended that I was going to leave, the congregation appeared to awake as from a sleep. They at once drew up a memorial to Lord Howe, which was signed by three hundred and eighty-four persons in a few days. This was sent to his lordship; and a deputation of twelve lords offered to wait upon him to receive his answer. But the memorial was returned, and the deputation declined. So, at the stated time, I ceased to officiate at Curzon Chapel, and the congregation dispersed.

Often have I regretted this step, especially when I have called to mind the many acts of kindness and attention I received from my people. Among my present recollections I do not forget my two fellow-helpers in the ministry. The former of these came to me when I first entered upon my duties in this church. When he was called away to occupy an important position at Cape Town, another friend came forward and took his place. He also was a great comfort and help to me, and remained to the end. With me he continues to regret the break-up at Curzon Chapel.

It is impossible to think of that happy time, and the many generous friends, without much regret; though at the same time, I cannot do otherwise than thank God for bringing me out into a wider and more important sphere of usefulness. The generosity of the congregation, as to pecuniary matters, was not the object of my ministry; but for all that, it was a good indication that they were satisfied, and that their hearts were open to show their thankfulness in something more than words. At two of the special missions, which were held at Curzon Chapel, upwards of two hundred and seventy pounds were freely offered in the boxes at the doors. Out of this amount two hundred pounds were appropriated to the organ, which is now in the chapel. My appeals for public charities were liberally responded to.

For instance, when I asked for a contribution for hospitals, one hundred and fifty pounds were forthcoming at one service: when I pleaded for the "Church Missionary Society," one hundred pounds were given; for the Indian famine, eighty pounds; and so on. Besides the pew-rents, six pounds a week on an average were collected for the current expenses of the chapel.

These were contributions to public charities, and for necessary expenses; but there were others of a private nature, which were even more freely given. Those connected with myself I feel bound to mention.

One Christmas time, while I was in domestic affliction and distress, it came into the minds of two housekeepers, who attended my ministry, to collect a small sum in order to give me a "little" Christmas present. They had not the remotest suspicion that I had any want at that particular time; for as a rule I do not tell my troubles to neighbours and friends, who have enough of their own—but to God. He has invited, yea even commanded, us to call upon Him in the day of trouble (see Psalm l. 15), and bids us cast all our care upon Him, for He careth for us. (See 1 Peter v. 7.)

It so happened that I was in need, and had told my trouble at the Throne of Grace. This is how and why it came into the minds of my humble friends to "give me something." They hoped to collect about twenty pounds; but before many days, one had already obtained over fifty, and the other almost as much. Each of them said, that although they were collecting secretly, people ran after them with money.

On a set day I observed an unusually large attendance at the Bible-reading, and wondered why it was. While the last verse of the hymn was being sung, I saw the clerk coming up the aisle with a large silver salver. On beholding it, I earnestly hoped they were not going to present me with that thing. "Is it come to this," I thought, "a silver salver, in place of the orthodox tea-pot, as a testimonial of respect and esteem?" However, I was not kept long in suspense. A gentleman came forward, and took from the ample surface of that conspicuous plate (which had been borrowed for the occasion), a purse which he handed to me, saying, "It contains one hundred guineas." I was taken by surprise indeed, and could not help telling the kind donors, that though they did not know my present need the Lord did. I said, "I feel sure that God put it into your hearts to give me this seasonable help." Many of the friends assembled were moved to tears, as I testified of this personal instance of the loving-kindness of the Lord. I thanked them heartily, and begged they would join with me in thanking and praising the Lord also. After this I exhorted them to trust God as I had done, and that under all circumstances. I believe He sends or permits troubles, not to trouble us, but to bring us to Himself, that He might melt us more and more with His love.

A lady, who was in town at the time, happened to be at church that night. Hearing that this present had originated from servants, she immediately set on foot a subscription from the masters, and in a short time sent me the handsome sum of two hundred and fifty pounds more.

Various other tokens of love and thankfulness I could record, which I continue to remember with deep gratitude. I have learned what a blessed thing it is to have an empty purse, which nevertheless has money in it when it is needed! For many years I have experienced the happiness of trusting my Heavenly Father for all things.

When I left Curzon Chapel, I entered at once into the work of Parochial Missions, and have been incessantly labouring in this field for the last four years. I did not seek or make this opening for myself. If anything, I much regretted being disturbed from Curzon Chapel and my work there. However, I can see now that it was the right thing, though I did not do so at the time.

It is another instance, in my life, of the Lord's leading me in a way that I knew not. He has not forsaken His servant, nor ceased to direct his steps. What is more, He has given me another helpmeet in my second wife, who is in full sympathy, and as thoroughly devoted to the work as myself.

We go from parish to parish as we are invited, and from one place to another, proclaiming the two-fold message to the saved and the unsaved: to the former, that they may be stirred up to become workers for the Lord; and to the latter, that they may be saved. It is so important to their own well-being and joy, that believers should understand that they were not created or redeemed to be saved: rather they were created, redeemed, and saved, that they should be witnesses in themselves of the love of God, and testify about His willingness to save others.

In every place in our mission journeys, we find some believers like stranded vessels: they did run well; but somehow their peace ebbed away, and the joy of their salvation passed from them. Oh, the blessedness of going to the help of such, and encouraging them to make a fresh start! The stopping-places of nature are the starting-places of grace! Therefore I urge them to launch out again, and never more trust to their own prayers or resolutions; but in a Risen and Living Christ. He is able to keep them, even as a shepherd keeps his sheep. I have found—and, thank God, I have been enabled to restore—many bold and defiant backsliders, who have gone back from their first profession with revulsion and disappointment. They vainly kicked against the pricks, and in mistaken zeal vented their wrath against a Master whom they misunderstood, and a Gospel they never fully received.

Twenty years ago, at the time when the history contained in this volume commences, laymen were doubtful whether they ought to preach; and the general public thought it an absurd thing for any one to say his sins were pardoned. Now, everywhere we find forgiven ones praising God, and this in spite of increasing infidelity and wickedness.

Our meetings are largely attended by incipient believers, who are hungering for something more. It is our privilege, as simply and definitely as we can, to direct those who have received life by "a look at the Crucified One" on Calvary, to look at Him as a Risen Saviour. Then, we seek to lead those who see Him as such, to regard Him as the Ascended One, who is gone up on high to obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost for them. Endued with this (the baptism of fire), they are sanctified for service, and go forth in the power of God to work: yet not they, but God Himself working in them. Finally, we point believers to the Coming Christ: He redeemed our bodies as well as our souls; and when He comes again He will glorify every one whom He justifies. In short, we desire to set forth a FULL CHRIST, who has been made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that whosoever glories may glory in the Lord. (1 Cor. i. 30, 31.)

I can, and do most thankfully and joyfully, testify that it has been my privilege to have and see more work for the Lord than ever before. I have also proved more fully than ever the blessedness of being only an instrument in the Lord's hand. Not only do I realize this in my own experience, but have opportunities of going from place to place to tell it. Oh that many may be encouraged to offer and present themselves to the Lord, body, soul, and spirit, a living sacrifice!

It is a great mistake to ask God to help us to work: we should rather give up ourselves to Him that He may use us. Therefore, instead of our asking Him to help us, we should understand that He is asking us to help Him. The work is not ours but His; and He is the Worker, or Doer of it. It matters little how unworthy the instrument, the great Lord can accomplish His purpose with it. The weaker the tool, the greater is the glory of Him who can produce successful results.

Some men work from natural restlessness; others because they love work and delight to be engaged in it; and others again ask the Lord to help and assist them. The true workers are those in whom God dwells and works—He working in them "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 13). Man's work, however earnestly, zealously, and conscientiously done, is but wood, hay, stubble; and as such will all be burned. God's work, on the other hand, is as gold, silver, precious stones, which will stand the fiery test which is to try every man's work of what sort it is. (See 1 Cor. iii. 13.) Many hard workers will lose their crown—not because they did not work, but because they did, and so intently, that they did not let the Lord work in and by them.

Last, not least, it has been my delight to be a help to my brethren, the Rectors, Vicars, and Curates of numerous parishes. Many of these are desiring to lead their people to know the power as well as the form of godliness—longing to bring them from spiritual death into life and liberty. Wonderful is the change which God has wrought in the hearts and minds of many of the clergy. It is indeed worthy of record, and a matter for praise to God—an indication that the Lord Himself is working in the dear old Church of England. She has been all too long in bondage, first to worldliness and indifference, and then to human religiousness. Spiritual liberty is the only thing which can set her free, and make her ministers work, with an energy and power worthy of their position and influence.

We have witnessed many remarkable conversions and answers to prayer; also marvellous revivals of God's work in believers' hearts, by raising them to a higher platform of spiritual experience. I could fill a volume as bulky as this, with the narration of interesting facts and incidents of missions and mission work. Perhaps in some other form I may yet tell these things.

Well may I say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake" (Psalm cxv. 1).

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